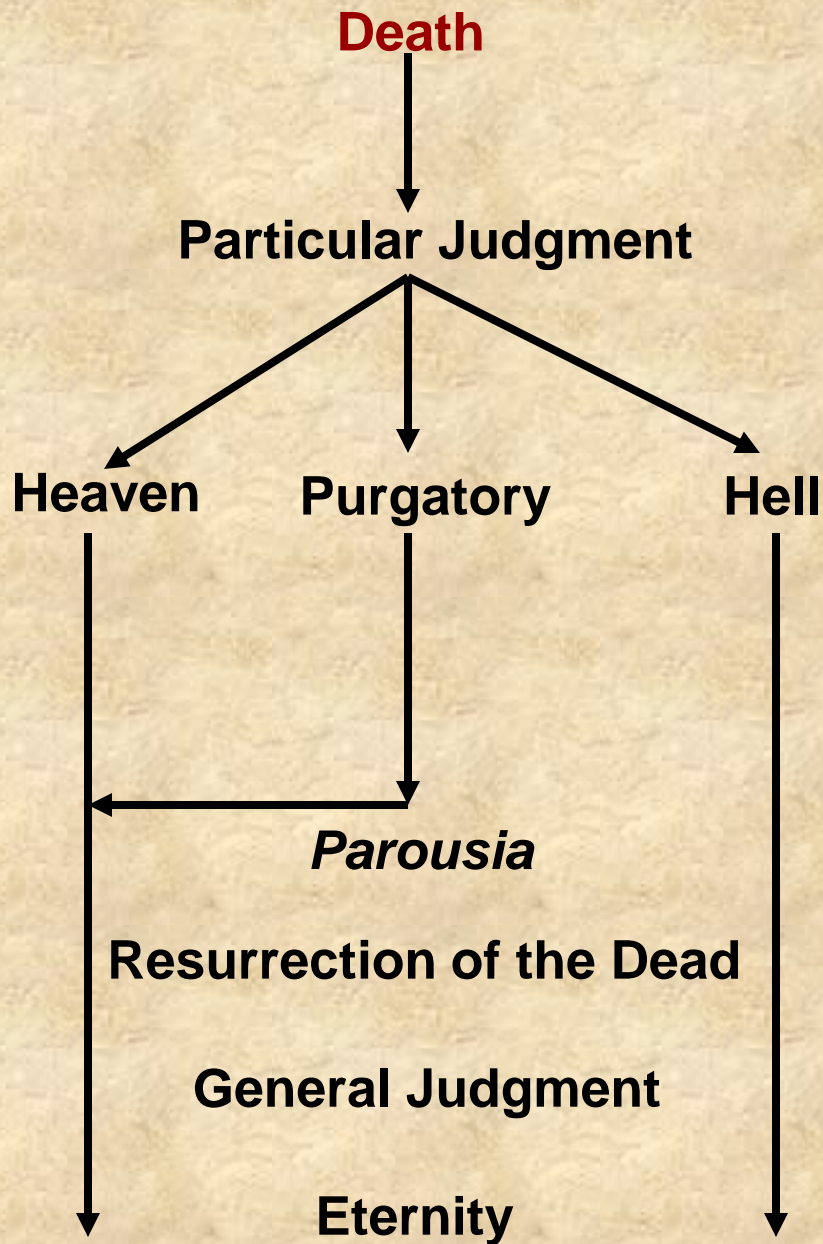


ESCHATOLOGY:

The Last Things





Revelation 6: 8

I looked, and there was **a pale green horse**. Its rider was named **Death**, and Hades accompanied him. They were given authority over a quarter of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and plague, and by means of the beasts of the earth.



Death

Christians believe that human death closes the state of human life or the time of probation.

Scripture speaks of death in many ways:

- as a return to dirt (Genesis 3:19);
- as a departure (2 Timothy 4:6; Philippians 1:23);
- to be at home (2 Corinthians 5:8-9);
- a discarding of a tent (2 Peter 1: 13-14);
- a sleeping (Matthew 9:24, John 11:11-13);
- a rest (Revelation 14:13);
- a return to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7);
- to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23); and
- to live with Christ (2 Timothy 2:11).

Ecclesiastes 12:5-7

Because man goes to his lasting home, and mourners go about the streets; Before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken, And the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the broken pulley falls into the well, And **the dust returns to the earth** as it once was, and **the life breath returns to God** who gave it.

2 Corinthians 5:1

For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have **a building from God**, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:4

For while we are in this tent we groan and are weighed down, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that **what is mortal may be swallowed up by life**.

2 Corinthians 5:8

Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and **go home** to the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:6

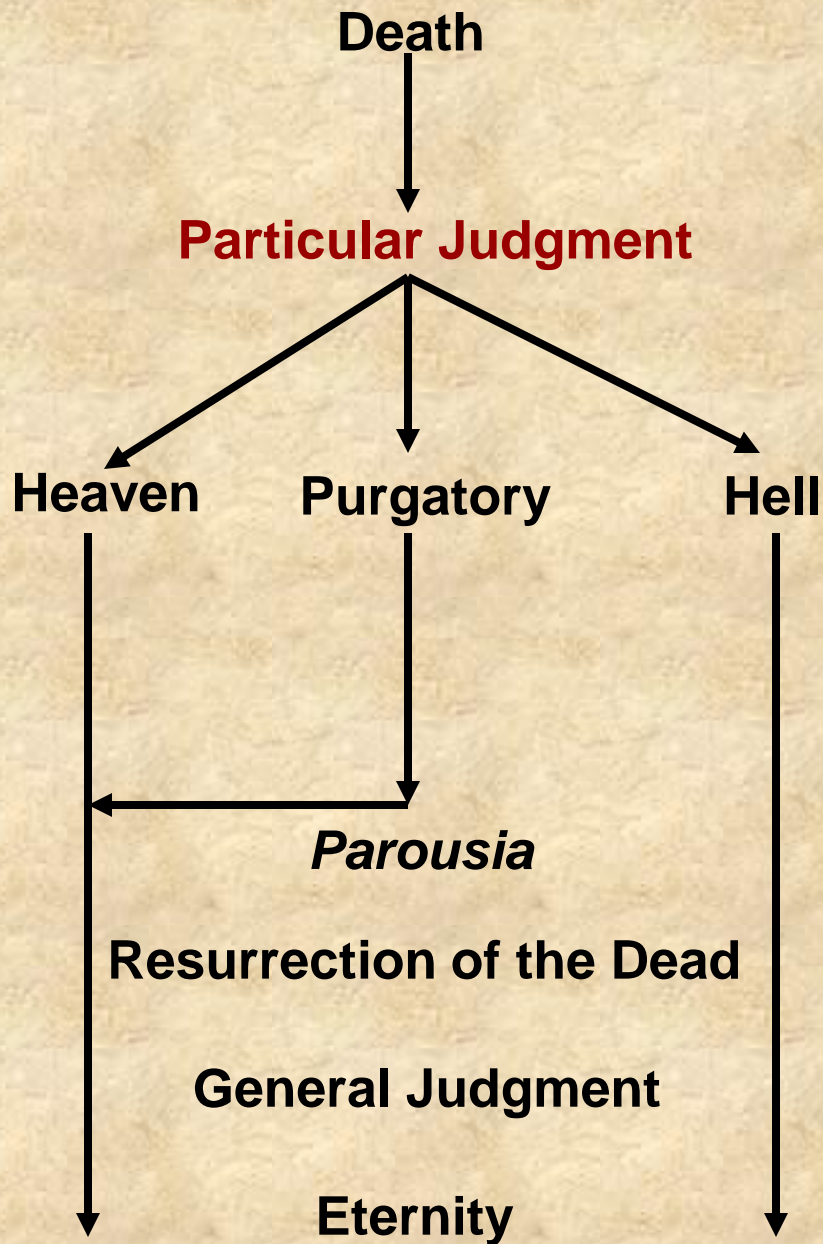
For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the **time of my departure** is at hand.

Philippians 1:21-23

For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and **be with Christ**, (for) that is far better.

2 Peter 1:13-14

I think it right, as long as I am in this "tent," to stir you up by a reminder, since I know that I will soon have **to put it aside**, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me.



Immediately after Death: Particular Judgment

Catholic Christians and many other Christians believe that **immediately after death** the souls of men and women go either to heaven (or prior to that, purgatory), or to hell definitively.



Michelangelo's
Last Judgment
Sistine Chapel
Vatican City

Luke 16: 19-36

(Jesus said to them [the Pharisees]:...) "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was **carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham**. The rich man also died and was buried, and **from the netherworld, where he was in torment**, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for **I am suffering torment in these flames**.'

Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you **a great chasm** is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, **'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'**"

Luke 23: 43

He (Jesus) replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will **be with me in Paradise.**"

2 Corinthians 5: 6-8

So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather **leave the body and go home to the Lord.**

1 Thessalonians 5:10

(Jesus) died for us, so that **whether we are awake or asleep** we may live together with him.

Philippians 1:21-23

For to me **life is Christ, and death is gain.** If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, (for) that is far better.

The constant faith of the Church attests to the faith in the permanency of human death. That faith is best described in the writings of the Fathers of the Church.



Irenaeus of Lyons (circa 130-200), set forth the idea of death as the separation of the soul from the body.

The identical idea is found in **Tertullian** in the third century; **Gregory of Nyssa** (circa 330-395) in the fourth.

That death as a separation of the soul from the body is graphically described by **Augustine of Hippo (354-439)** in his book, *The City of God*.



Clement of Rome (d. circa 100) affirmed the permanency of death as separation and the impossibility of meriting or losing meriting after death.

Cyprian of Carthage (cir 200-258) mentions the same fact several times in his writings.

Later **Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389)** and

John Chrysostom of Constantinople (347-407) mention the fact several times.

It also occurs in **Gregory the Great in Rome (540-604)**.



The Magisterium of the Church has confirmed throughout centuries the eternal lot of all souls, either in heaven, purgatory or hell is decided once for all at the moment of death.

Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus*, January 29, 1336,

"We define that the souls of all the saints who have left this life soon after individual death are or will be in heaven and have eternal life; in addition we define that the souls of those dying in actual mortal sin soon after individual death descend into hell."
(Denzinger 530)



Council of Lyons II, 1274

"We believe...that those truly penitent die in charity before they have done sufficient penance for their sins of omission and commission, their souls are cleansed after death in purgatorial or cleansing punishments; ... the souls of those who have not committed any sin at all after they received holy baptism, and the souls of those who have committed sin, but have been cleansed, either while they were in the body or afterwards ... are promptly taken up into heaven. The souls of those who die in mortal sin or with only original sin soon go down into hell, but there they will receive different punishments."

(Denzinger 464)

St. Bonaventure at the
Council of Lyons II



Reincarnation

It is not uncommon that people under the influence of the New Age Movement and Hollywood movies ask about the possibility of another or previous life or other lives for the soul. Catholic Christianity and all orthodox Christian faith communities have always found in the Word of God clear revelation of the unique nature of this life, of individual death and a definitive judgment for the soul.



Matthew 25: 31-41

(Then Jesus told the crowds and his disciples: ...) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 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.' ... Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

Luke 16: 19-36

(Jesus said to them [the Pharisees]:...) "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores ..."

Hebrews 9:27-28

Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Being Taken Up Into Heaven

The question of those still alive at the time of the end of the world has always concerned believers. Some evangelical Christians have developed a teaching on the so-called "rapture." It is based on a passage from Matthew's Gospel. Some believe in a rapture before Jesus' second coming. These teachings began in 1830 in the Plymouth Church in England from a man named John Nelson Darby.



Catholic Christians simply accept Christ's explanation of those still alive at the end of the world.

Matthew 24:36-42

(In reply, Jesus said to them:) "But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In (those) days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be (also) at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will **be taken**, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will **be taken**, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."

Paul says that

(1) the **resurrection of the dead will precede the second coming.**

According to Paul, the Lord will command those who have suffered human death to rise. Only then

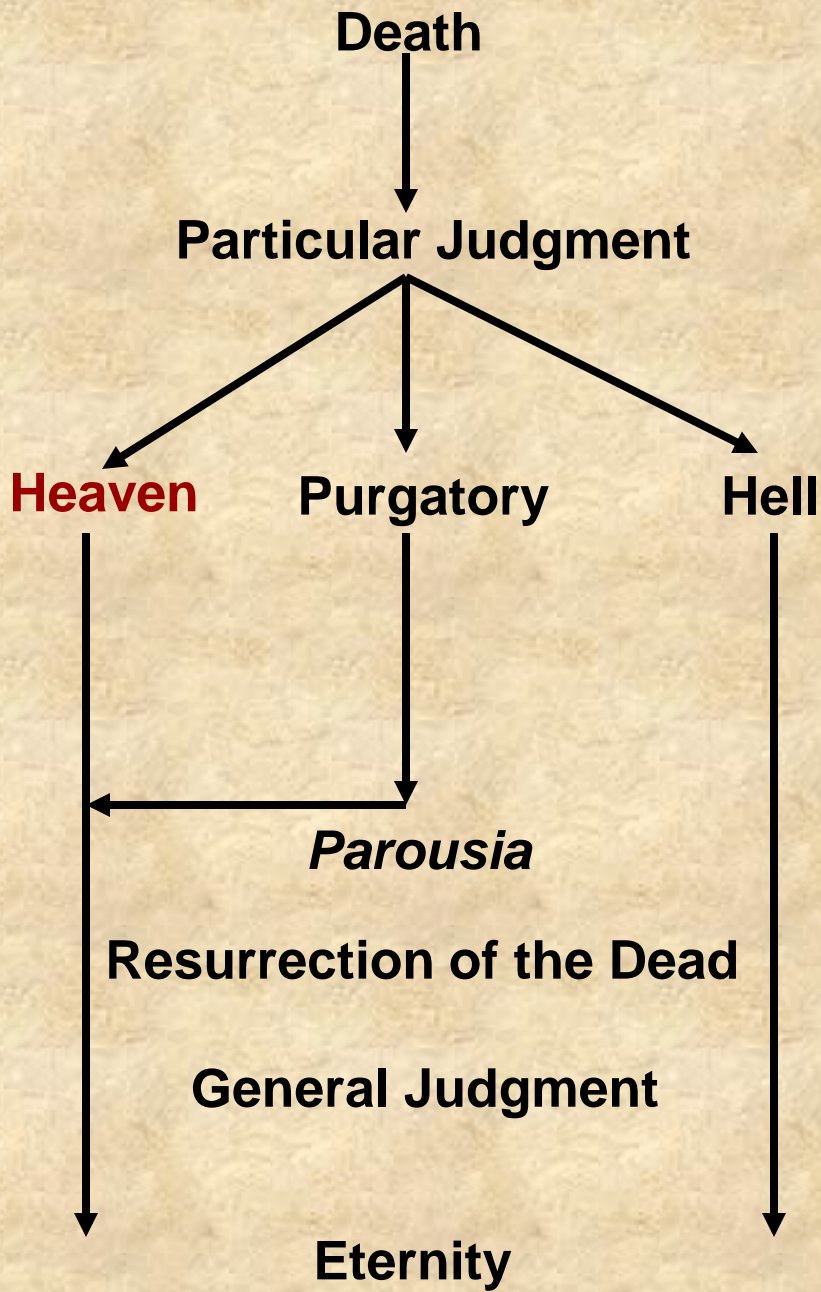
(2) will **those still living at the end of time join the resurrected dead.** Both groups together

(3) will be **witnesses to Christ's coming.**

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** Then we who are **alive, who are left, will be caught up** together with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air.** Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore, console one another with these words.



Heaven

Catholic Christians and all other Christians believe in the blessedness of heaven realized in the possession of God.

Scripture speaks of heaven in many ways:

- as life (Matthew 18:8);
- as eternal life (Matthew 25:46);
- as the crown of life (James 1:12);
- as the tree of life (Revelation 2:7);
- as glory (Romans 8:18);
- as eternal glory (2 Timothy 2:10);
- as the eternal glory of God (1 Peter 5:10);
- as rest (Hebrews 4:3, 11);
- as the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8);
- as the Kingdom (Matthew 25: 34);
- as a dwelling in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1);
- as paradise (Luke 23:43).

Those who are in heaven will have:

- great rewards (Luke 6:23);
- treasures (Matthew 6:20);
- an imperishable inheritance incapable of fading or defilement (1 Peter 1:4).

In heaven the blessed:

- will be with God (Revelation 21:3);
- will be with Christ (Mark 16:19);
- will be with the angels (Matthew 22:30);
- will be in the house of the Father where there are many dwelling places (John 14:2);
- are heirs of God, heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17);
- will see God face to face (1 Corinthians 13:9-12);
- will see God as he is (1 John 3:2).

They will reign forever and ever:

- illuminated by God (Revelation 22:3-5);
- immortal and physically incorruptible (Revelation 21:4);
- with an irreproachable conscience (1 Peter 3:21).

The Magisterium of the Church speaks of heaven in many ways:

- as eternal life (Denzinger, 640);
- as the eternal fatherland (Denzinger 457);
- as heaven (Denzinger 464);
- as the kingdom of heaven and celestial paradise (Denzinger 530);
- as the vision and fruition of God (Denzinger 530);
- as true beatitude (Denzinger 530);
- as eternal rest (Denzinger 530);
- as eternal beatitude (Denzinger 570);
- as the vision of God one and three (Denzinger 693);
- as glory (Denzinger 842);
- as eternal retribution (Denzinger 836);
- as the supernatural end (Denzinger 1669, 1786).

Matthew 13:43

Then the righteous will **shine like the sun** in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.

Romans 2:6-7, 10

... who will repay everyone according to his works: eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through perseverance in good works, ...

But there will be **glory, honor, and peace** for everyone who does good.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life, that they should **know you**, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 25:21

His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, **share your master's joy**.'

John 14:2-3

In my Father's house there are **many dwelling places**. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that **where I am you also may be**.

Psalms 73:23-25

Yet I am always with you; you take hold of my right hand. With your counsel you guide me, and at the end **receive me with honor**. Whom else have I in the heavens? None beside you delights me on earth.

Psalms 16:11

You will show me the path to life, **abounding joy** in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever.

Psalms 17:15

I am just--let me **see your face**; when I awake, let me be filled with your presence.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we **shall see him as he is.**

Luke 22:29-30

I **confer a kingdom on you**, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will **sit on thrones** judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to **an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading**, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.

1 Peter 5:4

And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the **unfading crown of glory**.

Revelation 21:27

... but nothing unclean will enter it (New Jerusalem, heaven), nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose **names are written in the Lamb's book of life**.

Wisdom 5:16

Therefore shall they receive **the splendid crown**, the beauteous diadem, from the hand of the Lord- For he shall shelter them with his right hand, and protect them with his arm.

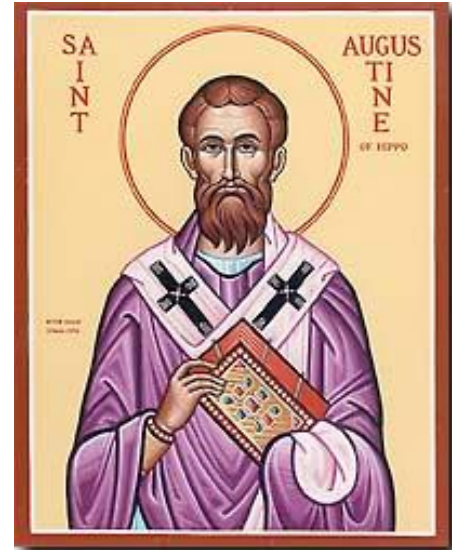
2 Corinthians 4:17

For this momentary light affliction is producing for us **an eternal weight of glory** beyond all comparison,

The **teachings of the Fathers of the Church** affirms the constant understanding of heaven in the history of faith.

Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 1, Ch. 1

"And man, being a part of your creation, desires to praise You. You move us to delight in praising You; for You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in you."



Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 11, Ch. 13

"From all this, it will readily occur to any one that the blessedness which an intelligent being desires as its legitimate object results from a combination of two things, namely, that it interruptedly enjoy the unchangeable good which is God; and that it be delivered from all doubt, and know certainly that it shall eternally abide in the same enjoyment."

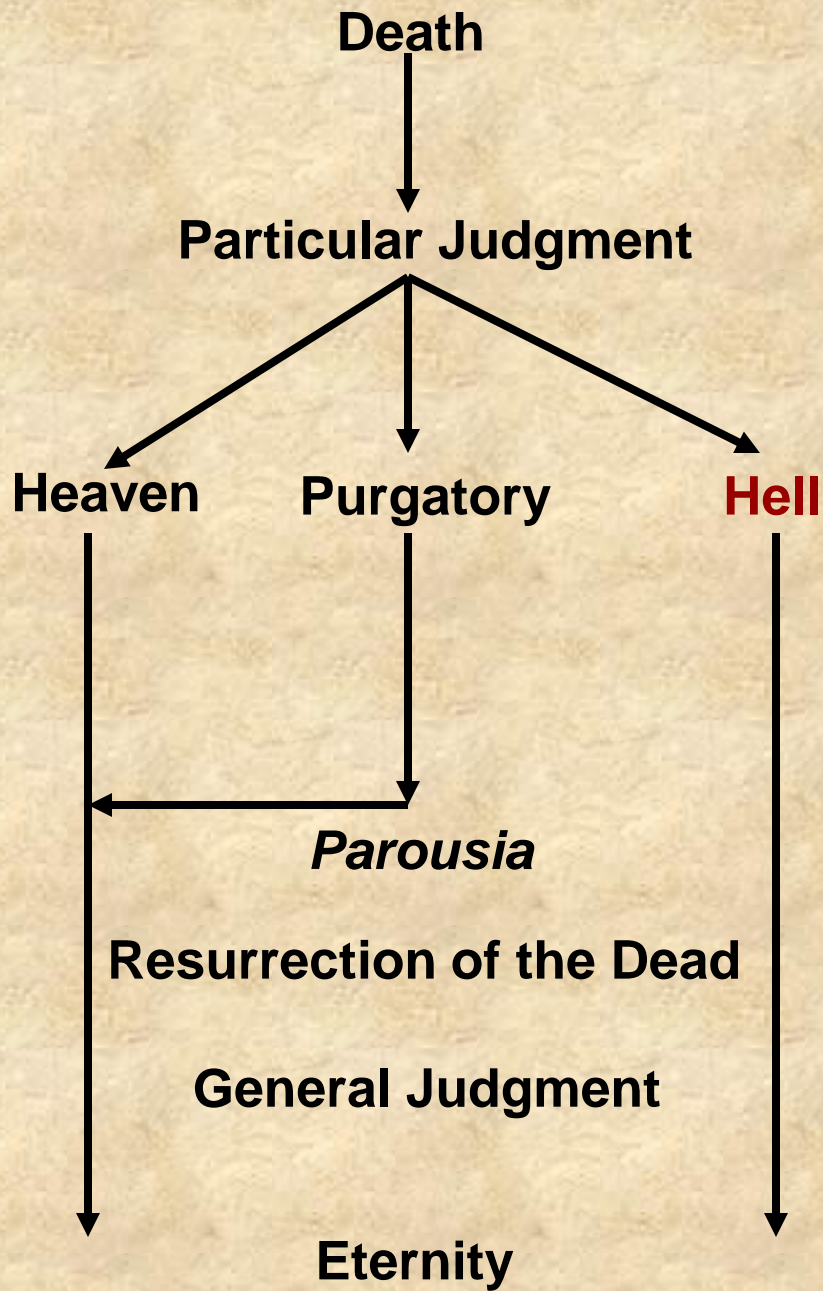


Clement of Alexandria *Stromata*, Book 7, Ch. 10

"For it is said, "To him that has shall be given" (Mt 25:29; Lk 19:26): to faith, knowledge; and to knowledge, love; and to love the inheritance. ... Whence at last ... it is that knowledge is committed to those fit and selected for it. It leads us to the endless and perfect end, teaching us beforehand the future life that we shall lead, according to God, and with gods; after we are freed from all punishment and penalty which we undergo, in consequence of our sins, for salutary purposes."



"After which redemption the reward and the honors are assigned to those who have become perfect; ... they have become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation; and they are called by the appellation of gods, being destined to sit on thrones with the other gods that have been first put in their places by the Savior."



Hell: Reprobation

Christians believe because the Bible is clear that hell exists.

Scripture speaks of hell in many ways:

- as a place of torment (Luke 16:28),
- as the netherworld (Luke 16:22),
- as the abyss (Luke 8:31; Revelation 9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3),
- as a fiery furnace (Matthew 13:42, 50),
- as a pool of fire (Revelation 20:10, 14),
- as a fiery pool of burning sulfur (Revelation 19:20),
- as a pool of fire and sulfur (Revelation 20:10; 21:8),
- as Tartarus (Greek mythological place of punishment) (2 Peter 2:4),
- as Gehenna or as the fire of Gehenna (Mt 5:22, 29; 10:28; 18:9; 23:33).

As a **state**, Scripture speaks of hell with many words:

- as death (Romans 6:21; 8:6; 8:13; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16),
- as the second death (Revelation 2:11; 20:6; 21:8),
- as eternal ruin (2 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Tim 6:9),
- as outside darkness (Matthew 8:12; 22:11-13; 25:30),
- as eternal fire (Matthew 18:8, 25:41; Jude 7),
- as eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46),
- as destruction (Matthew 7:13; Philippians 1:28; Peter 3:7),
- as damnation (Mark 16:16; John 12:25),
- as perishing (John 3:16; 10:27; Romans 2:12),
- as unquenchable fire (Mark 9:42-47; Luke 3:17),
- as fire and sulfur (Revelation 14:9-14),
- as thick gloom of darkness (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13),
- as corruption (Galatians 6:8),
- as Babylon (Revelation 18; 19:1-3)



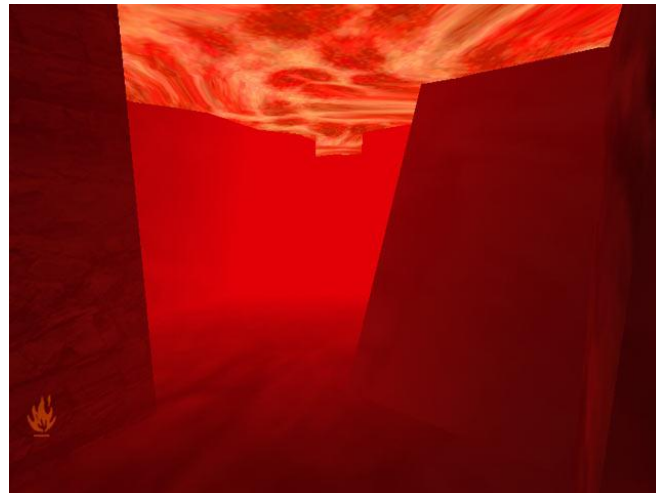
Gehenna
Outside Jerusalem



Michelangelo's Last Judgment
Sistine Chapel
Vatican City

Matthew 25: 31-46

(Then Jesus told the crowds and his disciples: ...) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ... Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, **into the eternal fire** prepared for the devil and his angels.' ... And these will go **off to eternal punishment**, but the righteous to eternal life."



Luke 16: 19-26

(Jesus said to them [the Pharisees]:...) "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from **the netherworld**, where he was **in torment**, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am **suffering torment in these flames**.'

Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' "



Mark 9:42-47

(Jesus said in reply ...) "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe (in me) to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into **Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire**. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna ..."

2 Thessalonians 1:9

These will pay the penalty of **eternal ruin**, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, ...

Matthew 13:40-42

Just as weeds are collected and burned (up) with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into **the fiery furnace**, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

John 15:6

Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and **throw them into a fire and they will be burned.**

Romans 2:6-9

... (he) will repay everyone according to his works: ... **wrath and fury** to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness. Yes, **affliction and distress** will come upon every human being who does evil, ...

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Do you not know that the unjust will **not inherit the kingdom of God**? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but **the wrath of God** remains upon him.

John 5:29

(This was Jesus' answer ...) those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to **the resurrection of condemnation.**

Revelation 21:27

But **nothing unclean will enter it** (the new Jerusalem, heaven), nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies.

Revelation 22:15

Outside (the new Jerusalem, heaven) are the dogs, the sorcerers, the unchaste, the murderers, the idol-worshippers, and **all who love and practice deceit**.

Matthew 10:28

And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can **destroy both soul and body in Gehenna**.

Revelation 21:8

But as for cowards, the unfaithful, the depraved, murderers, the unchaste, sorcerers, idol-worshippers, and deceivers of every sort, their lot is in **the burning pool of fire and sulfur**, which is the second death.

The **Fathers of the Church** reflect the constant faith of the Church on the existence and nature of hell.

Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians*, Ch. 16:1

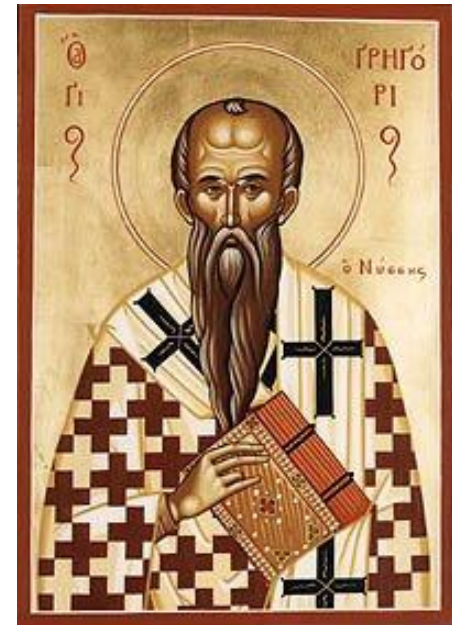
"Make no mistake, brethren; the corrupter of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. If, then, those are dead who do these things according to the flesh, how much worse if, with bad doctrine, one should corrupt the faith of God for which Jesus Christ was crucified.

Such a man, for becoming contaminated, will depart into unquenchable fire; and will any one who listens to him."



Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*, Ch. 40

"Indeed, the sinner's life of torment presents no equivalent to anything that pains the sense here. Even if some one of the punishments in that other world be named in terms that are well known here, the distinction is still not small. When you hear the word fire, you have been taught to think of a fire other than the fire we see, owing to something being added to that fire which in this there is not; for that fire is never quenched, whereas experience has discovered many ways of quenching this; and there is a great difference between a fire which can be extinguished, and one that does not admit of extinction."



The **teaching Magisterium of the Church** has also affirmed the existence and nature of hell.

The Lateran Council IV, 1215

"... the wicked (receive), a perpetual punishment with the devil ..."

Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254)

"But if anyone dies unrepentant in the state of mortal sin, he will undoubtedly be tormented forever in the fires of an everlasting hell." (Letter to the Bishop of Tusculum, Section 24)

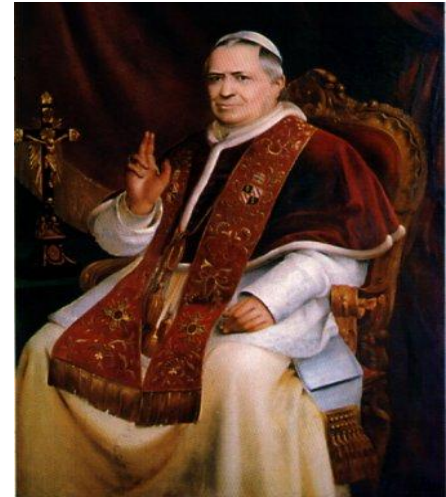


Vatican Council I, 1869-70

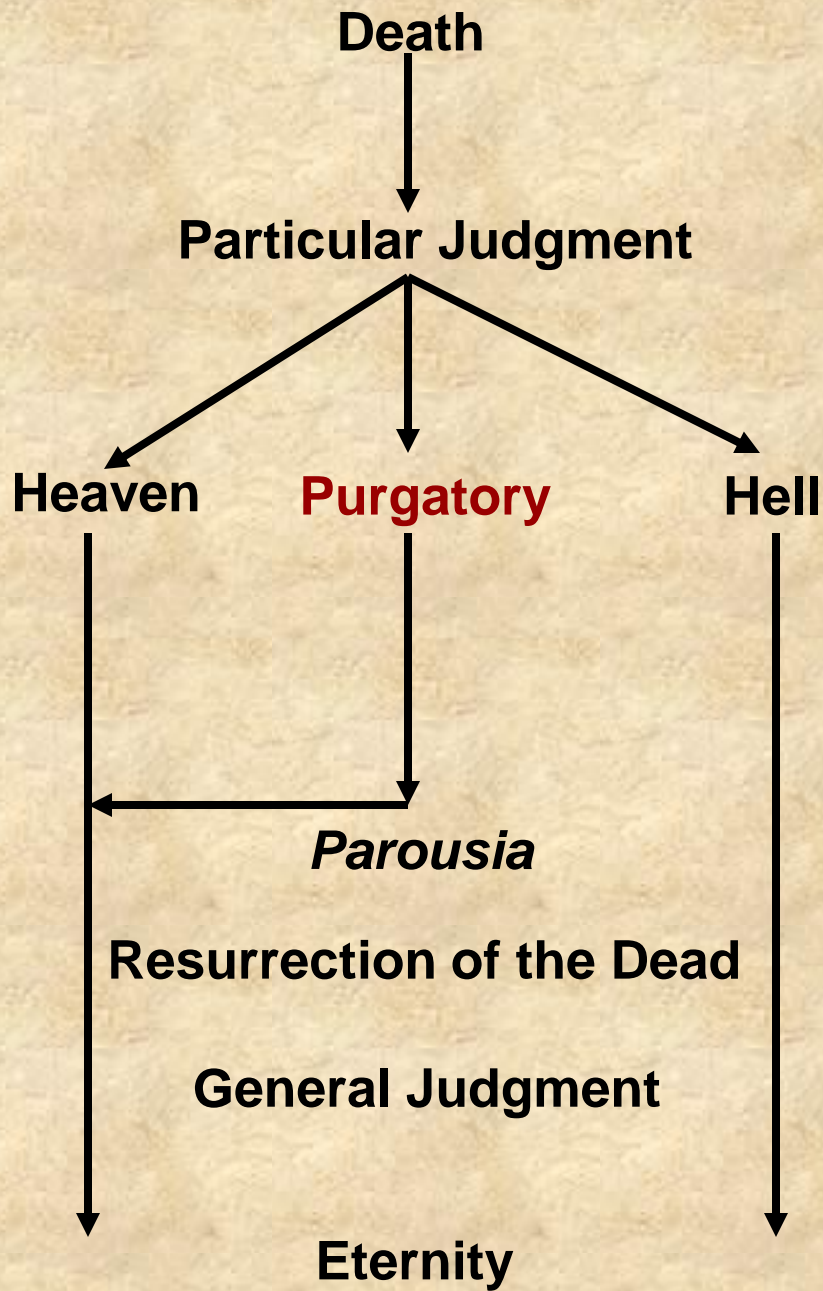
"Therefore, all who die in actual mortal sin are excluded from the kingdom of God and will suffer forever the torments of hell from which there is no redemption. If anyone says that a man can be justified even after death; or if he says that the punishments of the damned in hell will not last forever; let him be anathema."



Vatican Council I



Pope Pius IX



Purgatory

Sacred Scripture and the constant faith of the Church affirm that heaven and hell, as places, exist. Catholic Christians and other Christians also profess belief in a ***state of being***, not a place, called "purgatory."

The term "purgatory" is not found in the Bible; but neither are other such important Christian beliefs such as "Trinity" and "Incarnation."



Purgatory is defined as a state of being, the continuing process of purgation or purification of the soul after human death.

It is a state of perfection--begun in baptism and faith-consummated after death, *entered into only by those who are saved*. In other words, our transformation in Christ (Romans 13:14, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ"), our perfection in the holiness of the Father (1 Peter 1:16, "Be holy, because I (am) holy") is not ended at our physical death.

Purgatory is a sign of God's mercy on those who have honestly sought to know God and to do His will in this life and yet die in some degree of bondage to sin or the effects of sin.

The Church has only two official teachings concerning purgatory:

- ✓ it exists, and
- ✓ our prayers help the souls in purgatory.

God is revealed as perfect interior holiness.

Isaiah 6:3

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!" they (the Seraphim) cried one to the other.

We are called to that same holiness.

Leviticus 19:2

"Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."

1 Peter 1:15-16

As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy."

Who can stand in the face of the holiness of God?

Psalms 15:1

Lord, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy mountain?

Psalms 66:18

Had I cherished evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard.

Hebrews 12:14

Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Ephesians 5:3

Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting among holy ones.

Exodus 33:18-20

Then Moses said, "Do let me see your glory!" He (Yahweh) answered, "I will make all my beauty pass before you, and in your presence I will pronounce my name, 'Lord'; I who show favors to whom I will, I who grant mercy to whom I will. But my face you cannot see, for **no man sees me and still lives.**"

Revelation 21:27

... but **nothing unclean will enter it** (the City of God), nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her (the Church) to sanctify her, **cleansing her** by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, **without spot or wrinkle** or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

We are deprived of the vision of God because of our sinfulness. But there is a divine purging fire which can heal us.

Hebrews 12:29

For our God is a **consuming fire**.

Hebrews 12:6,10

For whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; **he scourges** every son he acknowledges. ... but he does so for our benefit, in order that we may share his holiness.

Isaiah 6:5-7

Then I (Isaiah) said, "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it. "See," he said, "now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged."



1 Corinthians 3:11-15

For no one can lay **a foundation** other than the one that is there, namely, **Jesus Christ**. If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. **It will be revealed with fire, and the fire (itself) will test the quality of each one's work**. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person will receive a wage. But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; **the person will be saved, but only as through fire**.

1 Pet 1:7

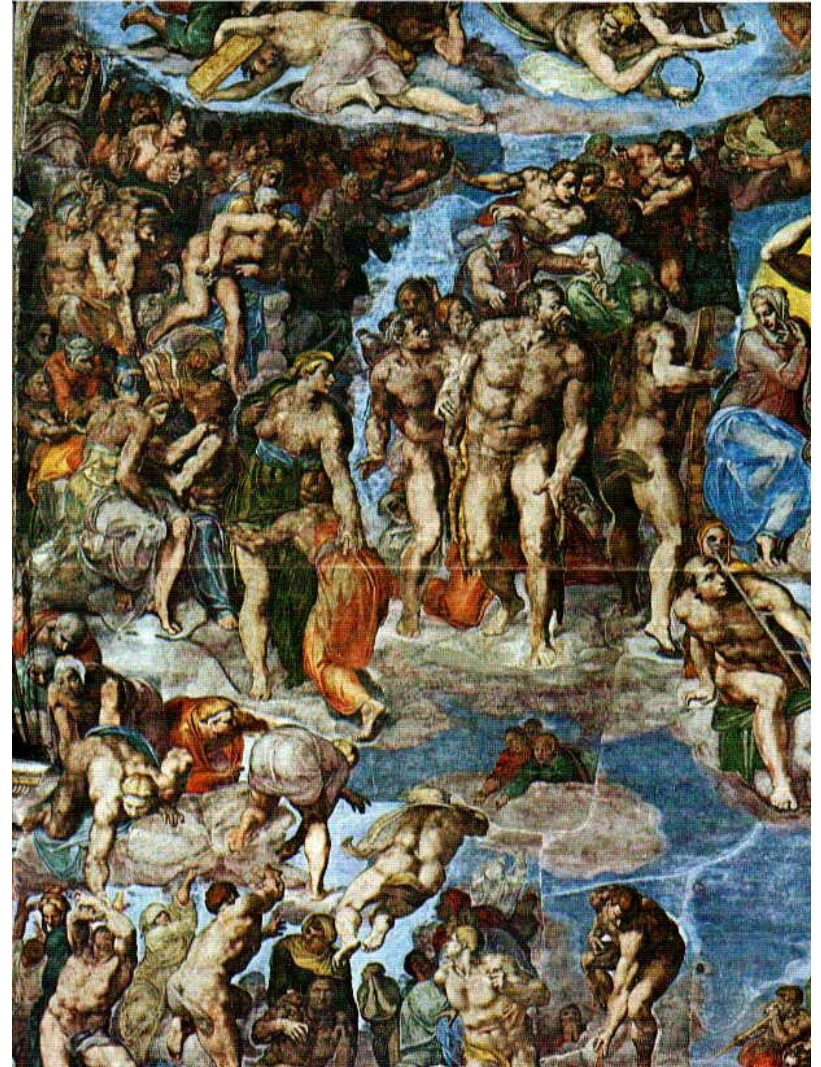
The genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus implies that our sins can be forgiven in the next world.

Matthew 12:32

And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or **in the age to come.**

Scripture from the Greek Septuagint, the Old Testament of Christ, the Evangelists and Paul, and of the councils of Hippo and Carthage, affirm purgatory.



2 Macabees 12:42-46

Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out. The noble Judas warned the soldiers to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

Experience teaches us that there are people who die so suddenly, they have not had the opportunity to confess their sins, but are not guilty of serious "death dealing" sin and separation from God.



Gathering the objects,
he '*sent 12,000 Drachmas
to Jerusalem to offer a sin
offering...*' (II Maccabees 12, 39-46).

Peter-Paul Rubens: Judas Maccabaeus praying for the Dead

The constant faith of the Church affirms the belief in purgatory. From the earliest of times, the Fathers of the Church taught the existence of purgatory:

**Tertullian (Rome, 160-220?), Origen (Alexandria, 185-254?),
Cyprian (Carthage, 200-258), Ambrose (Tier, 340-397),
Augustine (Numidia, 354-430), Basil (Caesarea, 329-379),
Gregory of Nazianzus (in Cappadocia, 329-389),
John Chrysostom (Antioch, 349-407),
Gregory the Great (Rome, 540-604), and many others.**



The teaching Magisterium of the Church also affirms the belief in purgatory.

Council of Lyons II (1274)

We believe ... that the souls, by the purifying compensation are purged after death.

Council of Florence (1438)

Repeated the Council of Lyons II (1274).

Council of Trent (1545-1563)

We constantly hold that purgatory exists, and that the souls of the faithful there detained are helped by the prayers of the faithful.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section 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 and Trent**. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire. [Cf. 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Pet 1:7.] 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.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section 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.

Limbo

The word limbo comes from the Latin word *limbus* which means a border, a hem, or fringe around the edge of a garment. The term is associated in common parlance to mean some in-between state of being.

It is often associated, in a religious context, with **some state of being in neither heaven nor hell**, therefore on the fringe of either. It has been used to refer to **the abode for the dead who were neither capable of committing deadly sin** (1 John 5:16) which excluded the soul from hell nor were baptized in water and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5) which excluded the soul from heaven.

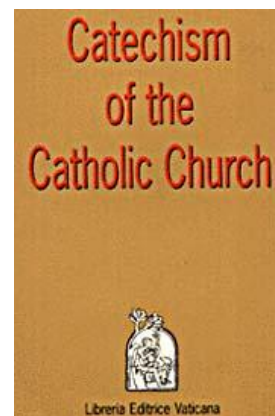
The first official Roman Catholic doctrinal teaching on the existence of or state of limbo was promulgated in 2007, in the document, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptized*.

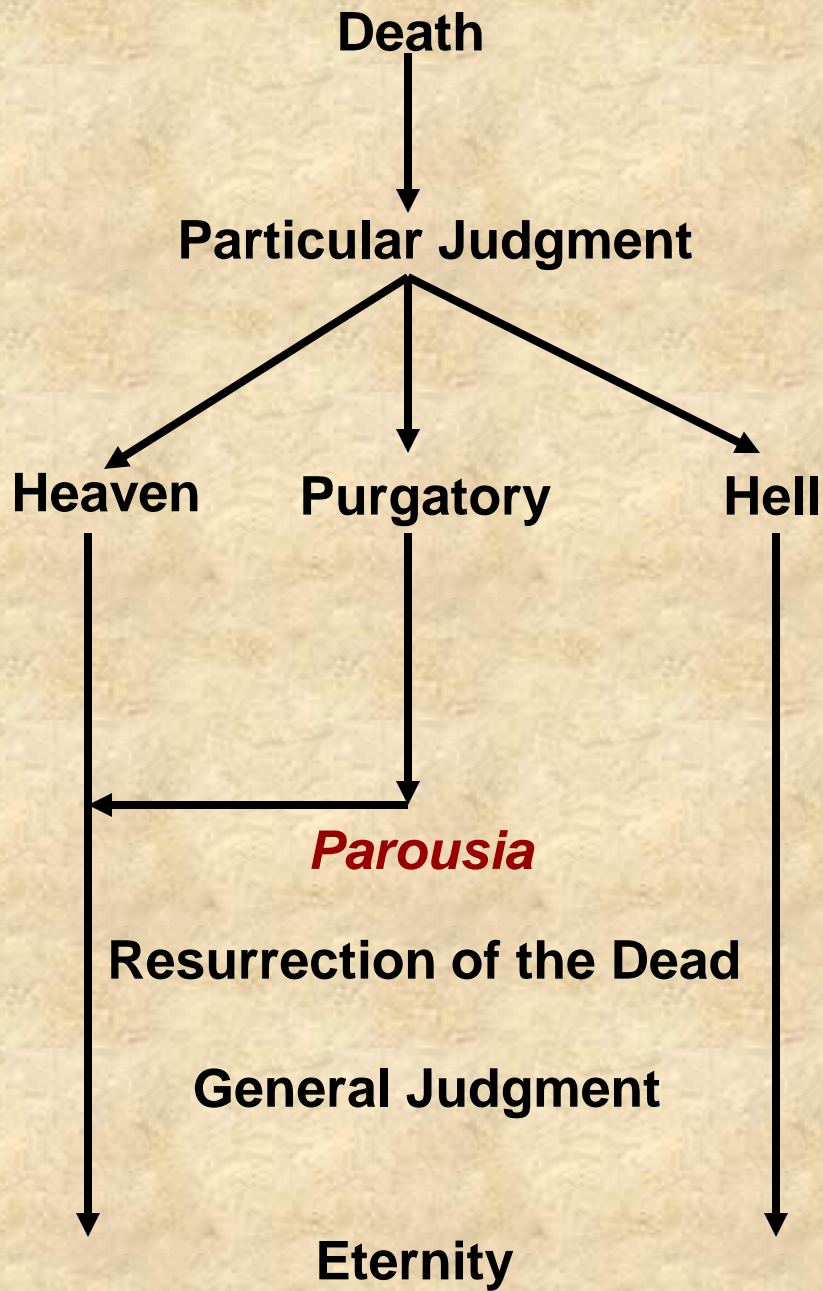
The conclusion of this study is that there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved and brought into eternal happiness.

Limbo received a lot of attention in **pastoral practice** when pastors needed to explain the mind of God to distraught parents whose newborn infant had died without being baptized.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section 1261

As regards **children who have died without baptism**, the Church can only **entrust them to the mercy of God**, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God, who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children, which caused him to say, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them" [Mark 10:14, cf. 1 Tim. 2:4], allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism. All the more urgent is **the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy baptism.**





The Parousia: Christ's Second Coming

Catholic Christians have always believed that Jesus Christ would come back to close the current period of human history in earth. The time when Jesus will return is given many names: **the Day of the Lord, the *Parousia*, the end time, and the Second Coming of Christ.**



The Bible describes the events of Jesus' return in apocalyptic images.

Mark 13:26-27

And then they will **see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory**, and then he will send out the angels and gather (his) elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

Matthew 16:27

For **the Son of Man will come with his angels** in his Father's glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.

Acts 1:11

They (two men dressed in white) said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will **return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.**"

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For **the Lord himself**, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, **will come down from heaven**, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.



The parousia will be unmistakable because it will be accompanied by unprecedented signs.

Matthew 24:27

For just as **lightning comes from the east and is seen as far as the west**, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Some signs are general events concerning the evangelization of the world.

Matthew 24:14

And this **gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world** as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.

Other signs are more proximate. Mark (Chapter 13), Matthew (Chapter 24), and Luke (Chapter 21) all describe the unmistakable signs with apocalyptic images.

2 Timothy 4:1-2

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by **his appearing and his kingly power**, proclaim the word ...

2 Timothy 3:1-5

But understand this: there will be **terrifying times in the last days**. People will be self-centered and lovers of money, proud, haughty, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious, callous, implacable, slanderous, licentious, brutal, hating what is good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, as they make a pretense of religion but deny its power. Reject them.

No one knows exactly when this will occur.

Mark 13:32

(Jesus began his discourse ...) "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but **only the Father.**"

1 Thessalonians 5:2

For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come **like a thief at night.**

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come **like a thief**, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

The Catholic Church teaches that we should avoid pointless speculations about the time, the details of the signs, the nature of the difficulties, etc. The Church focuses instead on the need for living the Gospel so as to be prepared for the parousia whenever it happens.

Mark 13:33,35-37

(Jesus began his discourse ...) "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. ... **Watch, therefore; you do not know when** the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: **'Watch!'**"

1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, **gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly,** and **set your hopes completely on the grace** to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, **be holy yourselves** in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy."

Millennialism: A Thousand Year Reign

There exists among many Evangelical Protestants a dogma based on some passages in the Bible called *millennialism* which means a "thousand year reign." The basis for millennialism is found in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 20:1-15

Then I saw an angel come down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the abyss and a heavy chain. He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, which is the Devil or Satan, and tied it up for **a thousand years** and threw it into the abyss, which he locked over it and sealed, so that it could no longer lead the nations astray until **the thousand years** are completed. After this, it is to be released for a short time.

Then I saw thrones; those who sat on them were entrusted with judgment. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast or its image nor had accepted its mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and they reigned with Christ for **a thousand years**. The rest of the dead did not come to life until **the thousand years** were over. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over these; they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for (the) **thousand years**.

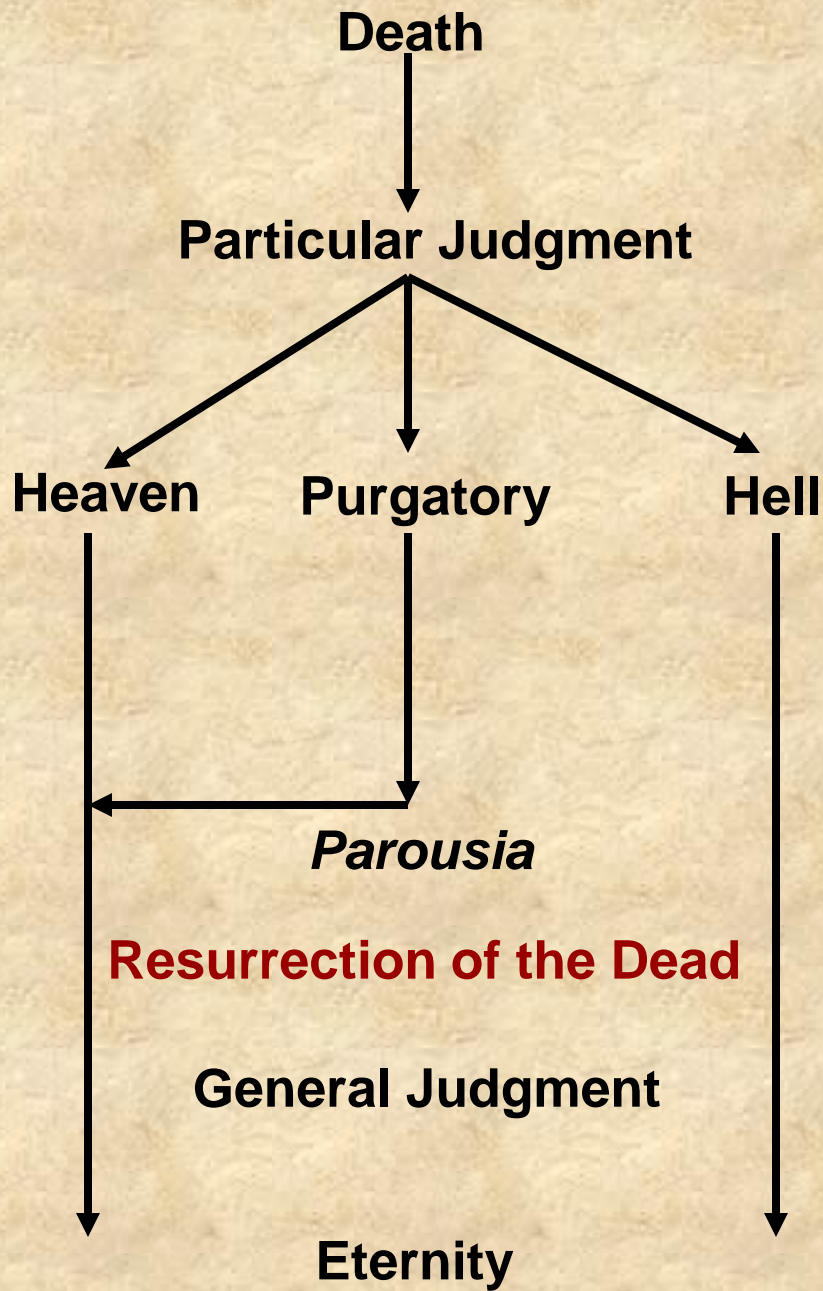
When **the thousand years** are completed, Satan will be released from his prison. He will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. They invaded the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down from heaven and consumed them. The Devil who had led them astray was thrown into the pool of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Next I saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened.

Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.) Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire.

The **Magisterium of the Church** has never commented on a thousand year reign of Christ. Rather, as is already clear from what is covered in these notes, the Church does not see the Second Coming of Christ at any other time than at the general judgment of all men and women which is the same as the resurrection of the dead followed by definitive reward or punishment for souls.

The Church interprets the expression "**a thousand years**" not literally but according to the literature in which it appears-
-prophetic and apocalyptic. In apocalyptic literature, a thousand years would simply indicate a long period of time, in this case, the time period before the Second Coming of Christ.

Apocalyptic literature is **not to be taken literally**.



Resurrection of the Dead

All Christians hold firmly to the belief expressed in the Bible and mirrored in the resurrection from the dead of Jesus of the resurrection of all men and women.

By "resurrection" Christians do not mean only the return to life in the body of a dead human being; **it means taking on a completely new existence.**

We believe that the souls of all those who have died will be reunited to their bodies; but those bodies will have different characteristics.



We Catholic Christians profess this belief often when we pray the Apostles Creed: "I believe in ... the resurrection of the body. "

In the Nicene Creed, we profess: "We look for the resurrection of the dead. "

Matthew 22:29-32

Jesus said to them in reply, "You are misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven. And **concerning the resurrection of the dead**, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is **not the God of the dead but of the living.**"

Matthew 5:29-30

(He [Jesus] began to teach them ...) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is **better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.**

John 11:22-26

Jesus said to her (Martha), "Your brother will rise."
Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "**I am the resurrection and the life**; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 6:40

(Jesus explained to them (the disciples):) For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and **I shall raise him (on) the last day.**

John 6:51

(Jesus told them:) I am the living bread ... whoever eats this bread **will live forever.**

John 6:54

(Jesus told them:) Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and **I will raise him on the last day.**

Catholic Christians believe that the dead will rise with bodies similar to those they had on earth. Some important evidence for **our resurrected bodies** is to read the qualities of the resurrected body of Jesus:

- ✓ appeared suddenly then disappeared;
- ✓ passed through walls;
- ✓ his body seemed to be the same as it was before death;
but it was also very different;
- ✓ he even changed his appearance so that his disciples didn't recognize him (Luke 24).

Church believes we will resurrect the same bodies as we had on earth by the language of the Bible. The resurrection will change these bodies into a glorified form. The word "reawakening" is used in reference to the resurrection.

Catholic scholars have distinguished certain **qualities of our resurrected bodies**:

- ✓ ***impassability***: freedom from physical ills of any kind (sickness, death, etc.);
- ✓ ***subtility***: the spiritualization of the body--dominated by the soul;
- ✓ ***agility***: the ability of the soul to move the body with ease and speed;
- ✓ ***clarity***: freedom from defects--having great beauty and radiance.

Paul also speaks in language of reawakening instead of replacement:

1 Corinthians 15:53

For that which is corruptible must **clothe itself with incorruptibility**, and that which is mortal must **clothe itself with immortality**.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown Corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable; it is raised **glorious**. It is sown weak; it is raised **powerful**. It is sown a natural body; it is raised **a spiritual body**.

Scripture speaks of the resurrection of both the blessed and the damned:

John 5:28-29

(Jesus' answer:) Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to **the resurrection of life**, but those who have done wicked deeds to **the resurrection of condemnation**.

Matthew 22:23-32; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40

On that day Sadducees approached him (Jesus), saying that there is no resurrection. They put this question to him, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies without children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up descendants for his brother.'

Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died and, having no descendants, left his wife to his brother. The same happened with the second and the third, through all seven. Finally the woman died. Now at the resurrection, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had been married to her." Jesus said to them in reply, "You are misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God. **At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage** but are like the angels in heaven. And **concerning the resurrection of the dead**, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not **the God** of the dead but **of the living**."

John 11:22-26

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, **even if he dies, will live**, and everyone who lives and believes in me **will never die**. Do you believe this?"

Acts 23:6

Paul was aware that some were Sadducees and some Pharisees, so he called out before the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; (I) am on trial for **hope in the resurrection of the dead**."

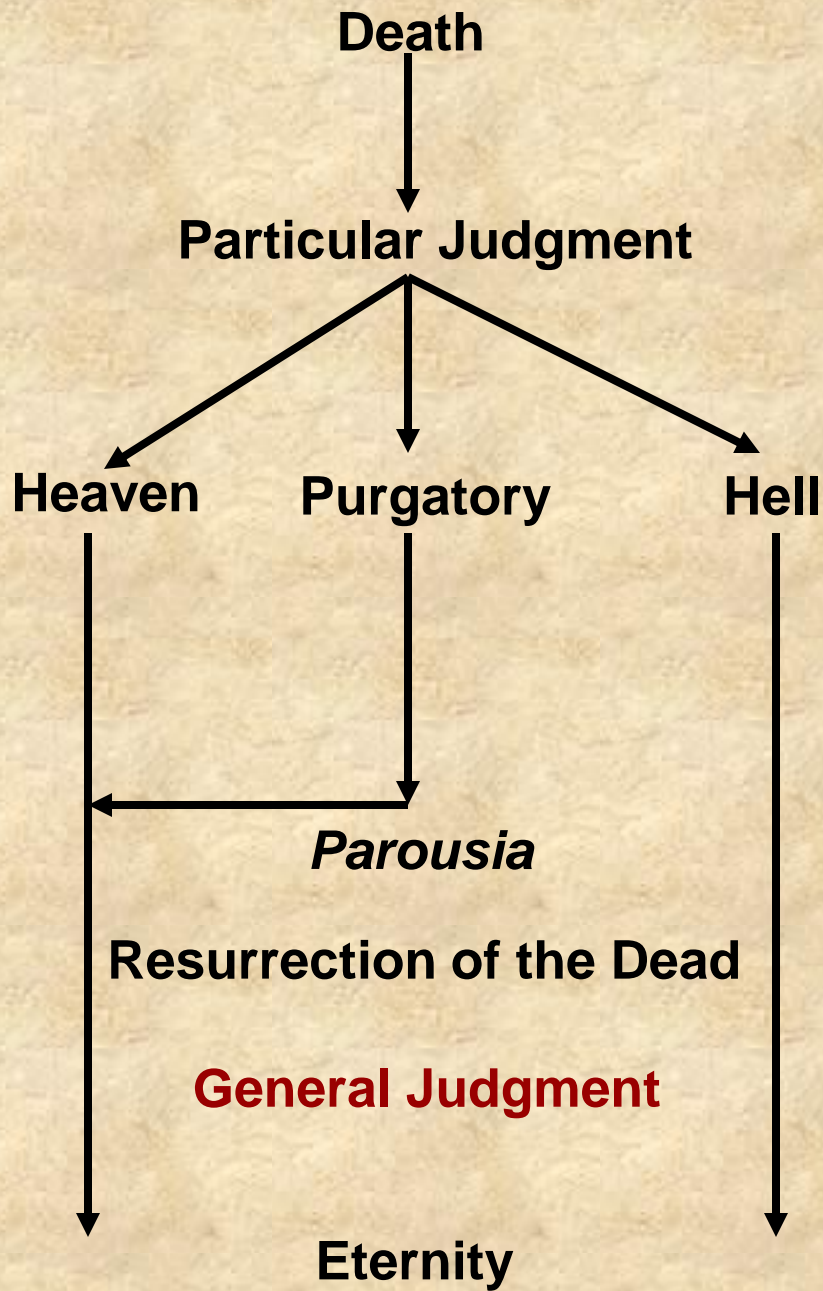
The Magisterium constantly proclaims the truth of the resurrection of the body.

Council of Toledo XI, 675

Thus, according to the model of our Head, we profess that **there is a true bodily resurrection of all the dead...** we shall rise in this very body in which we now live and are and move. (Denzinger 287)

Lateran Council IV, 1215

... He (Christ) will come at the end of the world; he will judge the living and the dead; and he will reward all, both the lost and elect, according to their works. And **all these will rise** with their own bodies which they now have so that they may receive according to their works, whether good or bad; the wicked, a perpetual punishment with the devil; the good, eternal glory with Christ. (Denzinger 429)



General Judgment

As we began the study of eschatology, we saw that each individual person is judged by God immediately after his or her death. That prompt sentence is called the particular judgment.

The Bible is very emphatic in asserting that there is also a general judgment of all mankind at the end of the world. The **particular judgment** addresses each of us as **individual and personal**; the **general judgment** will address all of us as **social**, members of society. Also, after the resurrection, the body must also share the judgment of the soul.

The general judgment addresses both **the whole human person**, resurrected body reunited with the soul, and the whole of human society.

Christians pray and affirm their belief in a general judgment in the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed

Jesus Christ ... sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.



Scripture is abundantly clear on the point of general judgment for all people.

Matthew 16:27

For **the Son of Man will come** with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.

John 5:22-29

Nor does the Father judge anyone, but **he has given all judgment to his Son**, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. ... And he gave him **power to exercise judgment**, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation.

Matthew 25: 31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 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. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Acts 10:42

(Peter addressed them in these words) ... He (Jesus) commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one **appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.**

Romans 2:15-16

They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them on the day when, according to my gospel, **God will judge people's hidden works through Christ Jesus.**

Revelation 20:11-15

Next I saw **a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it.** The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne,

and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The **dead were judged** according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the **dead were judged** according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.) Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire.



The New Creation

The Bible tells all Christians what life after general judgment will be like. John wrote of his visions of the New Creation in his book of Revelation.

Revelation 21:1-8

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.



I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them (as their God).

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away." The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then he said, "Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true." He said to me, "They are accomplished. I (am) the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son. But as for cowards, the unfaithful, the depraved, murderers, the unchaste, sorcerers, idol-worshipers, and deceivers of every sort, their lot is in the burning pool of fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Revelation 5:13

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe, cry out: "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever."





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