

Purgatory--Purification After Death By Fire

Heb. 12:29 - God is a consuming fire (of love in heaven, of purgation in purgatory, or of suffering and damnation in hell).

1 Cor. 3:10-15 - works are judged after death and tested by fire.

Some works are lost, but the person is still saved. Paul is referring to the state of purgation called purgatory. The venial sins (bad works) that were committed are burned up after death, but the person is still brought to salvation. This state after death cannot be heaven (no one with venial sins is present) or hell (there is no forgiveness and salvation).

1 Cor. 3:15 – “if any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”

The phrase for "suffer loss" in the Greek is "zemiothesetai." The root word is "zemioo" which also refers to punishment. The construction "zemiothesetai" is used in Ex. 21:22 and Prov. 19:19 which refers to punishment (from the Hebrew "anash" meaning "punish" or "penalty"). Hence, this verse proves that there is an expiation of temporal punishment after our death, but the person is still saved. This cannot mean heaven (there is no punishment in heaven) and this cannot mean hell (the possibility of expiation no longer exists and the person is not saved).

1 Cor. 3:15 – further, Paul writes “he himself will be saved, "but only" (or “yet so”) as through fire.”

“He will be saved” in the Greek is “sothesetai” (which means eternal salvation). The phrase "but only" (or “yet so”) in the Greek is "houtos" which means "in the same manner." This means that man is both eternally rewarded and eternally saved in the same manner by fire.

1 Cor. 3:13 - when Paul writes about God revealing the quality of each man's work by fire and purifying him, this purification relates to his sins (not just his good works).

Protestants, in attempting to disprove the reality of purgatory, argue that Paul was only writing about rewarding good works, and not punishing sins (because punishing and purifying a man from sins would be admitting that there is a purgatory).

1 Cor. 3:17 - but this verse proves that the purgation after death deals with punishing sin. That is, destroying God's temple is a bad work, which is a mortal sin, which leads to death. 1 Cor. 3:14,15,17 - purgatory thus reveals the state of righteousness (v.14), state of venial sin (v.15) and the state of mortal sin (v.17), all of which are judged after death.

1 Peter 1:6-7 - Peter refers to this purgatorial fire to test the fruits of our faith.

Jude 1:23 - the people who are saved are being snatched out of the fire.

People are already saved if they are in heaven, and there is no possibility of salvation if they are in hell. These people are being led to heaven from purgatory.

Rev. 3:18-19 - Jesus refers to this fire as what refines into gold those He loves if they repent of their sins.

This is in the context of after death because Jesus, speaking from heaven, awards the white garment of salvation after the purgation of fire (both after death).

Dan 12:10 - Daniel refers to this refining by saying many shall purify themselves, make themselves white and be refined.

Wis. 3:5-6 - the dead are disciplined and tested by fire to receive their heavenly reward. This is the fire of purgatory.

Sirach 2:5 - for gold is tested in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.

Zech. 13:8-9 - God says 2/3 shall perish, and 1/3 shall be left alive, put into the fire, and refined like silver and tested like gold.

The ones that perish go to hell, and there is no need for refinement in heaven, so those being refined are in purgatory.

Mal. 3:2-3 - also refers to God's purification of the righteous at their death.

...excerpt from SpiritualCatholic.com