

SYSTEMATIC

THEOLOGY

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DISTANCE

PARADISE & PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD



PARADISE & HADES

While there are many different ways of viewing Hades and Paradise in the early Church Fathers, there is a strand of patristic teaching found in Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement, Irenaeus, Augustine, and others that holds Hades—the place of the dead—had two regions, Abraham’s bosom a place of rest for the faithful departed, and Hades proper a place of punishment for the unrighteous.

- St Augustine held that Christ descended into Abraham’s Bosom (also called Paradise) and Hades at his death (FC 30:225–6)
- Paradise
 - Jesus said to the thief on the cross: ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’ (Luke 23:43)
 - For clarity sake, I like to distinguish Abraham’s Bosom, Hades, and Paradise.
 - My own understanding is that at his death, Christ went to Abraham’s bosom and preached the Gospel to the dead. The souls of the faithfully departed ascended into Paradise, a place in the heavenly realms, but not heaven proper. I think this is what is referred to when Scripture says, ‘the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised’ (Matt 27:52). After the second coming and the resurrection of the body at final Judgment, Death and Hades will be thrown into Hell (i.e., ‘the lake of fire’ in Rev 20:14) and the souls of the righteous in Paradise reunited with their resurrected bodies will enter into Heaven and enjoy the beatific vision in Heaven forever.



PURGATORY

Purgatory is the Roman Catholic doctrine that the sinner must undergo a final purification to pay for temporal penalties for sins they have committed before they enter the kingdom of heaven and enjoy the beatific vision, that is before they see God face to face.

- Cleansing by Fire
 - Purgatory is built upon the idea of a cleansing by fire referred to in Scripture
 - 'If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.' (1 Cor 3:15)
 - 'so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' (1 Pet 1:7)
- Atonement for the Dead
 - Purgatory is also built upon the idea that atonement can be made for the dead
 - 'Therefore he [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.' (2 Macc 12:46)
- Anglican Intermediate State
 - Some Anglicans, especially Anglo-Catholics, hold to a scriptural purification at the time of death
 - It is built on the idea that God's presence will purify our souls as we are united with him



PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

The commemoration of the dead to the mercies of God is built upon the idea of the communion of saints.

- Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.' (Hebrews 12:1)
- The idea is in the Communion of Saints (communio sanctorum) the living and the faithfully departed are one in the Body of Christ called the Church
- Commemoration of the Dead
 - The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes sharply between All Saints Day (the celebration of souls in heaven) and All Souls Day (the commemoration of souls in purgatory)
 - Since 1928 All Souls Day made it back into the Anglican Calendar, but without the idea of purgatory
- Prayers for the Dead
 - Anglicanism has recognized prayers for the dead, but not prayers to the dead.
 - There are three forms of invocations of the saints: comprecation or indirect invocation, direct invocation, and invocation for benefits
 - Comprecation is prayer to God that we may have our share in the intercessions of the blessed dead. It is common in ancient liturgies . . . ”
 - Direct invocation is requesting a Saint to pray for us like the Angelus which had until the sixteenth century been completely Scripture until was added, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.'
 - Request for benefits are prayers directly to saints for certain benefits. This is kind of prayer is forbidden by Article 22 in Anglicanism.
 - Prayer for the dead in Anglicanism appear in the Prayers of the People
 - Pastorally, prayers for the dead are helpful because people can commend their loved ones to the mercies of Jesus Christ

