

A Simple Explanation of Purgatory

By Jim Penrice

The doctrine of purgatory is one that any Christian should be able to understand and accept. So why is it not? There seems to be confusion over a fundamental difference between God's forgiveness and his purification; they are certainly not the same thing.

If God's forgiveness purified me, I would never need to seek forgiveness again—if I was pure, I'd commit no more offenses that need to be forgiven. But I constantly need God's forgiveness, so I am not yet purified. God's forgiveness cleanses me, refreshes and invigorates me, and gives me a new chance.

But purifies me? No. I am not pure, despite the countless times God has forgiven me—and for that very reason I know I still need to be purified. No amount of forgiveness will do that, and I can't purify myself.

Heaven is a place of perfection, where everyone is pure. Many people leave this earth forgiven, but no one leaves pure. A purification must take place, performed by the only one who can do so, between our passing from this imperfect Earth and our entrance into perfect Heaven. If not, Heaven is a place of forgiven people who still need to be forgiven over and over because they have not been purified, which would make Heaven no different than Earth.

It's really that simple.