

# THE AFTERLIFE

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In theology, a chapter is devoted to the Afterlife, to man's fate after death.

This fate remained mysterious for a long time, the Adamic fault having plunged the whole of humanity into the darkness of total ignorance for all that concerns the soul, the reasons for life on earth, spiritual life and the future of man. Archeology teaches us that the ancients believed in a vague survival, but still material. So, during the times of the Pharaohs, Egyptians buried their dead with food and drink to save them from hunger and thirst.

Divine Revelation gradually taught us that man, after death, continues to live outside his body, each one keeping his own personality. For example: Samuel, after his death reprimands Saul (1 Samuel 28,11-16), Judas Maccabee sees Jeremiah "praying a lot for the people..." (2 Maccabee 15,11-16): the Jews prayed for the dead soldiers, they then, continued to live in the Afterlife (2 Maccabee 12,40-46), Elijah and Moses appeared next to Jesus transfigured (Matthew 17,3).

Moreover, Biblical Revelation teaches us that there are three conditions, three states of the soul in which a person can find themselves in the Afterlife: Heaven, Purgatory, or Hell. These three states are not geographical nor interstellar places, but feelings of happiness or misery, of joy or sadness, due to the success or failure of the soul in its life on earth. They are sentiments which can already be felt from down here. How many times have we heard someone say: "I'm living hell", and then its suicide! Or the contrary: "I feel I'm in Heaven! I'm so happy!", and it is the blossoming and radiance of joy in the eyes! There is still that intermediary condition between the hell already lived and the heavenly bliss already felt: that of the person who is looking for himself: it is not yet total despair, but not happiness either, nor the joy of having accomplished something worthwhile, especially when having found oneself. It is the state of he or she who continues their journey in the dark in the hope of discovery.

The following are some Biblical verses to support what has been said:

## 1. Heaven

In his parable of Lazarus and the bad rich man (Luke 16,19-26), Jesus shows us these two protagonists in the Afterlife. The first is submerged in happiness, and the other suffers in the pangs of Hell as a result; an **INSURMOUNTABLE** abyss separates the two men who, on earth, were neighbors. This parable represents Heaven and Hell. They are both, a state of the soul acquired by each one on earth. Those who, from their life on earth, succeed in changing, in adapting their way of thinking to that of the heavenly spirit, will not find it difficult to integrate rapidly to the heavenly society. Those who, on the other hand, will stubbornly cling to their way of seeing and thinking, without even trying to understand the divine mentality, will be unsuitable in the Celestial Fatherland. It is Hell.

The intermediary state is Purgatory.

One can merit Heaven by a sudden change, by an intense and immediate act of love before dying. Jesus says to the good thief who expresses his faith and confidence in Him: "In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23,43).

Heaven, is to see God and to finally know Him as He is: "Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God" (Matthew 5,8). "And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17,3) "I want to be gone (from the body) and be with Christ", Paul exclaimed, conscious of the eternal happiness, perfection, which was reserved for him after his life in the flesh (Philippians 1,23).

"With him who fears the Lord it will be well at the last, and he will be blessed on the day of his death." (Ecclesiasticus 1,13) To be blessed by God, approved by Him, is eternal bliss. Hell, on the other hand, is to be cursed by God because of the malice committed.

Heavenly bliss is imperturbable and cannot be lost. It is stable forever: “Store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroy them and thieves cannot break in and steal.” (Matthew 6,20)

Social life in Heaven bathes in the mutual love lived between all its members. Neither hatred, envy, nor jealousy have a place there. Total and perfect harmony unite all celestial subjects, as one man, around God, their good Father.

## 2. Hell

Hell is the gathering of all those who are in an irreversible conflict with God. It is a state, a feeling of defeat, vanquished by the Almighty. These are souls forever distant from the Light because of their fierce resistance to God. These people never cared about God’s plan and do only what is in their heads. Deaf to divine injunctions, they go straight on their way, indifferent to divine solicitations.

It is the case of those who refused Jesus because He did not fit their political aims: “Whoever does not believe (*in Jesus*) is judged **already**” (John 3,18). This condemnation is in effect then, from hereon, on those who oppose God’s will. Jesus invites us to submit our will to that of the Creator inside us, by asking us to pray: “May your will be done”. Many prefer their own will to that of God’s.

The conflicts between men are likely to provoke very serious psychological disturbances. A moral fire burns the souls of lovers in conflict, transforming their lives into an often unbearable Hell. Even more so, when this conflict is between man and God, the source of Life, this invisible fire will consume, exhaust the person who opposes this divine momentum.

Some think that God is too good to let souls eternally burn in Hell. It would be treating such a serious subject very superficially, without truly understanding its implications:

1. It is not only about God, but about those who **eternally** resist Him. These souls are cursing God forever, who did not accomplish their will: for not having given them a Messiah according to their taste, for not having given them money, pleasure, power, etc...
2. It is true that God is infinitely good, but He is also infinitely righteous. His wrath is also an expression of His love, of that betrayed love: “Love is terrible whenever It is not loved”, one saint said of God.

Seeing that some souls everlastingly refuse his advances for unjust reasons, God finally ratifies their desires and turns them away, in turn, from his pacifying presence. He does not want to be surrounded by skeptics, egotists, and over proud people with delusions of grandeur, and unbalanced on all levels!

Here are some Biblical verses on this subject:

Daniel 12,2: “. . . many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace”.

Judith 16,17: God will take his vengeance on the enemies of believers, “The Lord Almighty will punish them on judgement day. . . and they shall weep with pain for evermore.” This pain is mainly psychological, similar to that experienced by the vanquished, it is the shame of those who are caught red-handed, ‘hand in bag’ (see Isaiah 66,24 / Wisdom 4,19).

Jesus also spoke of the eternal punishment of Hell; we have seen an example in the parable of Lazarus and the bad rich man. It is the “Hell fire (Matthew 5,22-29 / 10,28), where their worm does not die nor fire go out.” (Mark 9,48), “eternal fire” (Matthew 25,41), “a fire that will never go

out” (Matthew 3,12), “blazing furnace” (Matthew 13,42), “eternal punishment” (Matthew 25,46), “the dark” (Matthew 8,12), and “weeping and grinding of teeth”, against God and his people (Matthew 13,42-50 / 24,51 / Luke 13,28).

Moreover, Paul testifies that those who refuse to know God and fight the Gospel will have as “punishment to be lost eternally, excluded from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength” (2 Thessalonians 1,9 / Romans 2,6-9 / Hebrews 10,26-31). The pain of these damned is due to their dismay, and their regret at the triumph of the Gospel, which they had fought with all their soul.

The Book of Revelation also says that “the legacy for those who sided with the Beast against the Rider (Jesus) will be the second death in the burning lake of Sulphur” (Revelation 21,8), where “their torture will not stop, day or night, for ever and ever.” (Revelation 20,10)

It is “how the Lord”, according to Peter, “can rescue the good from the ordeal, and hold the wicked for their punishment until the day of Judgment, especially those who are governed by their corrupt bodily desires and have no respect for authority (*of God*).” (2 Peter 2,9-16)

A person was telling me that he did not believe in Hell. I knew that Mr. so-and-so had done a lot of harm to him, while pretending to be his friend (his wife was abused, his money stolen, and his shop too. He was just able to save his apartment and furniture). I then told him: “So, Mr. so-and-so will also experience eternal bliss despite all the evil he has done to you?!” Feeling concerned, he hesitated to affirm that Hell does not exist... even for Mr. so-and-so, who deserved it indeed! Ask those who do not believe in it, if Hell does not suit their enemies, George Bush would see Saddam Hussein there, and vice versa, many others would see Hitler indeed, the Israelis plunge all their enemies into it, Palestinians first. God has also **HIS** Justice. It delights the righteous persecuted by the wicked.

### 3. Purgatory

Since the grave fault of the first parents of humanity, man’s fate has changed. Victims of that fault, the generations that followed had to dress up their wounds. The world that was supposed to prepare us for a life of eternal happiness next to God, transformed into a crossroads from which three paths branch out: One that heads straight to Heaven, one which leads instantly to Hell, and an intermediate path, Purgatory which can continue after physical death, but which ultimately leads to Heaven.

Before the creation of man, Heaven existed, God himself being that Heaven. The fall of the demons created Hell. Purgatory is a situation specific to man after his fall. It is the condition of men of goodwill who pass through an evolution towards the better, towards the healing of the aftereffects of original sin.

For all men, the earth ought to be Purgatory, this place where time should be employed to acquire psychological and spiritual knowledge, lost in the original fall.

From the beginning, life on earth is intended to be an apprenticeship for eternal life. After the fall, this earthly life, before being this apprenticeship, has become a spiritual battleground in which men are called to take a stand for or against God or the devil. Those who, consciously or unconsciously choose God, should first heal from the Adamic wound, and then make their apprenticeship for eternal life. They should not lose this unique occasion, in view of the fact that there is no reincarnation as Paul’s text reveals (Hebrews 9,27). As for those who consciously or unconsciously choose the devil, their infernal fate is traced from earthly life.

As long as time exists, the third state of the soul, Purgatory, will exist. It ends with the end of times. This state of mind belongs to those who have been led to commit more or less serious irregularities, but which are always reparable. It is advantageous to remedy on earth the wounds caused to others because the difficulties are multiplied a hundredfold after death. It is what comes

out again in Christ's words: "When you go to court with your opponent, try to settle with him on the way (*the way of life on earth*), or he may drag you before the judge... and the bailiff have you thrown into prison. I tell you, you will not get out till you have paid the very last penny" (Luke 12,58-59). The fact that this "prisoner" has the possibility of getting out of jail, means that his sentence is not eternal. That is Purgatory.

Jesus taught us that every sin or blasphemy by man will be forgiven... but he who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the next (Matthew 12,31-32). There are therefore certain sins which are forgiven in the other world, after which one is integrated into the heavenly society at the proper rank. However, this salvation takes place "as one who has gone through fire", as Paul explains (1 Corinthians 3,15).

The possibility of forgiveness of some sins in the other world is revealed in the Old Testament: the Jews prayed for the forgiveness of the dead soldiers. (2 Maccabee 12,40-46)

St John confirms that there is an unforgivable sin, that he asks not to pray for. He asks us on the other hand, to pray for a brother whom we see committing a sin that does not lead to death, and we will give him life (1 John 5,16-17).

This last text shows that eternal life can be given back from hereon to those who do not commit sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin which leads to spiritual death, ie to Hell, from down here.

Thus is demonstrated this spiritual battlefield that is the earth. All men of good will should spend their lives on earth doing Purgatory. Happy are they, those who know how to make out of physical death, a simple passage to heavenly life. Better still, those who, from down here live Heaven by having taken part in the first Resurrection.

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