

Part 2 – The Underworld

Last session, we examined various parts of the Underworld and identified their occupants. We arrived at the following conclusions.

Torments/Hell – Holds the souls of the lost for all time from the Garden to the end of the Millennium. I mentioned that, although Scripture does not explicitly state this, the *Abyss might also* contain the Nephilim from the Flood, the descendants of that illicit union between angels and human women (Genesis 6:1-8). I am not prepared to be dogmatic on that point, but some do take that position.

Paradise once held the souls of the righteous dead from the Garden until the time of the Cross and the ascension of Jesus. It was a temporary holding place until sin could be judged at the Cross, and Christ could escort the souls there to Paradise in the Third Heaven. It has been empty ever since the Ascension and remains so today.

Great Gulf is an impassable chasm created to separate the souls of the righteous dead in Paradise from the souls of the lost in Torments/Hell.

Abyss/Tartarus is a compartment of the Underworld currently inhabited by the fallen angels from the Genesis 6 incident, where angels mated with human women, resulting in a corrupted human race that was judged by the Flood.

Last session, I mentioned that I thought this Great Gulf might be the same as the Abyss/Tartarus. Two different words are used to describe them, suggesting they are separate places, but both can be translated as “abyss.” The fact that the Abyss is called the *abussos* and the Great Gulf is called the *chasma* in Greek suggests that they are not the same. However, as I’ve examined the possible occupants of both, I am becoming a bit more convinced they could be the same place, just known by different but similar names. This is not uncommon in Scripture. Still, I don’t feel I can be dogmatic concerning either interpretation. Ultimately, though, it’s not that important. What matters most are the occupants, which we will discuss in this session.

Fallen Angels and Demons: Are They the Same?

This is another tricky question with no clear answers. Many believe that demons are simply fallen angels that are mainly active doing evil here on Earth. There is another view that they are completely different beings. Fallen angels are those once-holy angels who followed Satan in his rebellion and make up about one-third of all angelic beings and were cast out of Heaven after their fall. Although modern language often uses the terms interchangeably, according to ancient Jewish tradition, there is a distinction between fallen angels and demons.

All angels were originally created by God as holy angels, but some rebelled with Satan (Revelation 12:4; Isaiah 14:12-15). Among them are those who sinned in Genesis 6 (“sons of God” taking human women — Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). Fallen angels still have their own spiritual bodies and can appear as men (Genesis 18–19), take physical form, or remain invisible. They have no urgent need to inhabit another body. Their current state is that some are imprisoned while others roam freely in both heavenly and earthly realms.

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The Genesis 6 offenders are imprisoned in Tartarus.

Revelation 9:13 Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.

The statement that the four angels “are bound at the great river Euphrates” suggests that the Abyss, where fallen angels are confined, lies beneath the Euphrates River. Their ultimate destiny, however, is that all will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Matthew 25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Demons, on the other hand, are not created beings but are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim, the hybrid offspring of fallen angels and human women (Genesis 6:1–4). They appear to have a need to inhabit physical bodies and constantly seek out human or even animal hosts for that purpose.

Matthew 12:43 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

These demons are the ones Jesus confronted in Mark 5 and Luke 8 when a “man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit” came to meet Him. This possessed man was so powerful that chains could not hold him. He immediately recognized Jesus and His authority, and when Jesus commanded the spirit to leave the man, he asked for its name. He said, “My name is Legion, for we are many.” He begged Jesus to send them into a nearby herd of pigs, suggesting they needed to inhabit a physical body. Luke 8:31 states, “they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.” This indicates that some demons are in the Abyss. Jesus granted their request and cast them into the herd of pigs, causing 2000 pigs to run off a cliff and die.

Mark 5:11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹² and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” ¹³ So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

They are evil, restless, and hostile to God’s image in mankind. Currently, they roam the earth, influencing, possessing, and tormenting humans, especially the unsaved. Their impact on the saved is limited to demonic influence, as they cannot enter those who are saved because the Holy Spirit resides within them. But make no mistake, their influence can be

devastating to believers who fall prey to their tricks. Other demons appear to be temporarily imprisoned in the Abyss until the end times, assuming Luke 8:31 and Revelation 9:1–3 are referring to demons and not fallen angels. Their ultimate fate is to be cast into the Lake of Fire with Satan and fallen angels (Revelation 20:14-15).

Nephilim

According to Scripture and ancient Jewish tradition, the spirits of the Nephilim, the hybrid offspring of fallen angels and human women described in Genesis 6:1–4, did not go to the same place as ordinary human souls after death.

The Flood resulted in God's destruction of all corrupted flesh, including the Nephilim (Genesis 6:13, 17). The bodies of the Nephilim perished in the Floodwaters, but their spirits were left in a limbo status because they were neither fully human nor entirely angelic, but were illegitimate hybrid beings.

The Bible doesn't explicitly state that "the spirits of the Nephilim became demons," but ancient Jewish tradition and early Christian writers tend to believe so. The non-canonical Book of Enoch (1 Enoch 15:8–12) says that God told the rebellious angels, "The spirits of the giants... shall be called evil spirits upon the earth... Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men, and from the holy Watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits they shall be called."

I have already expressed my concerns about the whole "Watchers" thing and remind you that this book is not considered inspired, even though some quotes from it are found in Scripture, in particular from the early chapters of 1 Enoch.

In other words, their bodies were destroyed in the Flood, and their spirits were left to wander the earth as disembodied evil spirits that we now call "demons." As previously noted, this might explain why demons in the Gospels are obsessed with finding a human or animal host.

The angels who fathered them were imprisoned in Tartarus (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). All Nephilim spirits have not been sent to the Abyss yet, but were cursed to roam the earth until the final judgment. In the end, even these

disembodied spirits will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10–15).

Locust-like Demons

These demons released at the fifth trumpet in Revelation 9:1–11 and described as locusts are not ordinary insects, and they are not just symbolic — they are actual spiritual beings imprisoned in the Abyss until that moment.

Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. ² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

They are fallen angels or more likely demons currently imprisoned in the Abyss, a “bottomless pit.” They have been restrained since an “ancient rebellion,” most likely the Genesis 6 incident and the resulting Flood. Satan is given the key and opens the Abyss.

The “locust” description symbolizes destruction, similar to the plagues in Exodus. They have faces like men, indicating intelligence; hair like women,

possibly representing deceptive beauty or seduction; teeth like lions, showing ferocity; breastplates of iron, signifying invincibility; wings sounding like chariots, implying speed and fear; tails with scorpion stingers, representing pain-inflicting power. They are spirit beings capable of appearing in strange and frightening forms. Some compare this description to modern attack helicopters, but that was probably not the intention.

These locusts, however, did not eat vegetation. Their purpose was to torment, not kill (Revelation 9:5–6). Their target is only people who do not have the seal of God. Their power to harm lasts five months, a typical locust lifespan, symbolic of a limited judgment period.

Their leader is Abaddon (Hebrew) / Apollyon (Greek), meaning '*Destroyer*' (Revelation 9:11). This is probably a high-ranking fallen angel—possibly the chief over those imprisoned in the Abyss. His title indicates he is fully devoted to destruction.

Many scholars associate them with the angels “kept in eternal chains under darkness” (Jude 6) and “cast into Tartarus” (2 Peter 2:4). Whether fallen angels or demons, these beings were too dangerous to be free, so God confined them until the end times. Their release is temporary and under God’s sovereign control; they act only when the Abyss is opened and only for the designated period.

Lake of Fire

The Lake of Fire is the final destination for Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, all fallen angels, the spirits of the Nephilim, and all humans who reject the free gift of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. It is eternal (Revelation 20:10). It is not the same as Hades, which is only a temporary holding place in the Underworld until the Last Judgment.

Where is it? The Lake of Fire does not exist in the Underworld as some suggest. It is not connected to the Earth’s interior. It appears in Scripture after the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15), which itself takes place in a scene where “heaven and earth flee away” (v. 11). This suggests the judgments related to it occur in a cosmic or transcendent realm, not within the current physical universe. Some theologians propose that the Lake of Fire exists outside that renewed order—the New Heavens

and Earth—representing eternal exile. It lies somewhere in another realm that is as far from God and Heaven as is possible.

When was the Lake of Fire created? That isn't clearly stated, but there are some hints. The Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet are thrown into it immediately after the Second Advent, so it existed before the Second Advent. Then we have this ...

Matthew 5:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Jesus made this statement at the judgment of the Sheep and the Goats at the end of the Tribulation. “Prepared” is in the past tense, indicating it already exists. Since it was prepared “for the devil and his angels,” that means it was created either before, or at, or soon after Satan’s fall. That takes us back well before the creation of mankind.

Being sentenced to the Lake of Fire is called the “second death.”

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The statement “death and hades gave up the dead” simply means that the physical bodies of the unsaved will be joined with their spirits, which have been in Torments. The mention of “the sea” giving up its dead makes it clear that, regardless of how far a body has disintegrated, it will nevertheless be resurrected for this judgment. God is fully capable of finding all the displaced molecules that were once part of someone and reassembling them into a physical body.

Who ends up in the Lake of Fire? Anyone whose “name was not found written in the book of life,” those who have rejected the free gift of salvation, as shown by their lifestyles while alive.

Revelation 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars,

their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

The first death is physical death. The second death is eternal separation from God.

The Judgments

There are three formal judgments we now need to explore: the Bema, the Great White Throne, and the Fallen Angels.

Bema

The Bema judgment, which we have covered in other series, will only be briefly defined here. It is the judgment of Church Age believers who are raptured at the end of the Church Age before the Tribulation. I used the word “judgment,” but it should more accurately be called an “evaluation,” because it will be a review of the spiritual lives of Church Age believers. It will assess what the believer did or did not do with all the blessings and assets given to them for the purpose of advancing God’s Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — ¹³ each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

The fire tests the work, not the person. It reveals the true value of everything we did that we might have thought was righteous. Our human good is burned up in the test. Our divine good, which is done through the leading and power of the Holy Spirit that advances the Kingdom, will survive the fire test and emerge from it as valuable, “gold, silver, and precious stones.” Even if all your work is burned up, you will still be saved (v. 15). Those whose work survives will be rewarded (v. 14).

Although not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, it is believed that some form of Bema exists for believers from other dispensations throughout human history. Some passages that suggest this include:

Old Testament Saints:

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Tribulation Martyrs/Believers:

Revelation 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The Sheep and the Goats

This judgment happens at the end of the Tribulation and involves God separating those who persevered and lived through it as believers and did not accept the mark of the beast from those who did. These are mortals who survived the seven-year Tribulation.

Matthew 25:32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ 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.”

Matthew 25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

The “sheep” enter the Millennium in their human bodies. This guarantees that only believers will enter the Millennial Kingdom.

But what about the “goats”? These are unbelievers who sided with Antichrist, rejected God’s message, and persecuted God’s people. The “Goats” are immediately cast into the Lake of Fire — skipping Torments entirely.

Millennial Believers

Those believers in mortal bodies at the end of the Millennium will enter eternity in the New Creation. Their evaluation isn't explicitly detailed, but Revelation 21–22 suggests faithful service continues into eternal roles "His servants shall serve Him."

Great White Throne

This is also called the "Last Judgment" and is the final judgment of the lost for all time. Not in the possession of the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers at salvation, their names are not written in the Book of Life. The lost can only be judged by their human good (works), and since their righteousness does not come close to God's standard, they ultimately end up in the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Fallen Angels

All fallen angels are judged after the Millennium. Although not explicitly stated in Scripture, some believe that the judgment takes place at the Great White Throne. That would suggest that God conducts the judging. However, 1 Corinthians indicates that the saints will judge.

1 Corinthians 6:2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Others believe the final judgment may occur on Earth since it involves the saints serving as judges. Either way, once judged, they will be sentenced to the Lake of Fire.

Some fallen angels are already bound:

2 Peter 2:4 God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

Jude 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day

Others (like Satan and his hosts) are still active and roaming today.

Job 1:7 The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

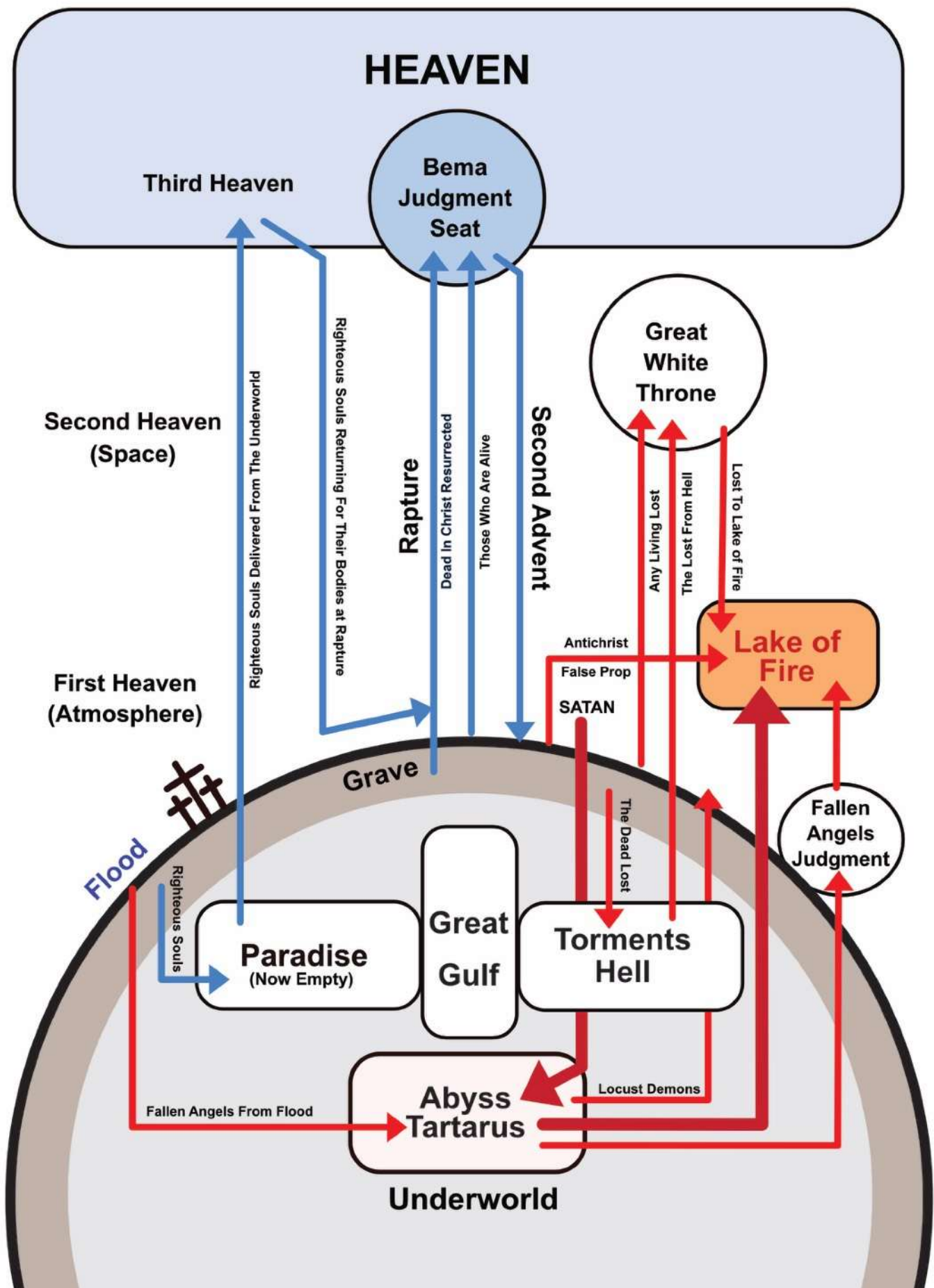
Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

But they are destined for judgment.

Revelation 20:10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

So, the final destination is the Lake of Fire, which is distinct from Hades/Sheol.



The Spaghetti Noodles.

For lack of a better name...

Starting on the extreme left of our illustration.

- 1) The red line from the word “Flood” to the Abyss represents the fallen angels from the Genesis 6 incident. They are sentenced to the Abyss/Tartarus to await their final disposition. At the end of the Millennium, they will be judged, likely on Earth, as suggested by the placement of the bubble on the right in my illustration.
- 2) Next, please note the blue line originating from the “Grave” area of the Earth, indicating that they are deceased. These are the saved, and as they die, their souls enter Paradise (in the Underworld). It is now empty because Jesus led the entire population housed there to Paradise (in Heaven) when He ascended after sin was judged at the Cross. They will return almost to Earth at the Rapture when Jesus descends from Heaven and calls out all Church Age saints. The dead will rise first, then those who are alive. This is illustrated by the blue lines in the center relating to the Bema bubble in Heaven. After the Rapture and during the Tribulation on Earth, these NT saints will have their spiritual lives evaluated for rewards or lack thereof. They will return in resurrection bodies with Christ at the Second Advent.
- 3) Next, we see the Antichrist and the False Prophet are sentenced directly to the Lake of Fire at the end of the Tribulation.
- 4) But Satan, the heavy red line, is cast into the Abyss after the Tribulation to await his final sentence to the Lake of Fire after he leads one last rebellion at the end of the Millennium.
- 5) As they die, the lost dead of all time go to the hell-like conditions of Torments to wait for their final judgment at the Great White Throne. There, they will be found condemned and sentenced to the Lake of Fire. This Last Judgment happens at the end of the Millennium, after the destruction of the current heavens and earth, but before God creates the New Heaven and New Earth. Scripture is not explicit, but some believe it takes place in a special realm before God’s throne, possibly in the heavenly court or in a transitional space outside of time and creation.

New Heavens and New Earth

After all of this occurs, the old Earth and Old Heavens are destroyed, and God creates a New Heavens and New Earth.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Summary

What we have learned is simply that “Hell” is far more complex than we have always understood it to be. It can better be understood as the “Underworld” and consists of different “compartments,” each having specific purposes and occupied by different occupants.

Bottom line: You don't want to go there, and you won't if you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior based solely on faith in what He did on the Cross.