

Tartarus

One of the most fundamental tenants of Christianity is that there is a place called Hell where the unrighteous are tormented. All those who die without having repented of their sins and believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are sent there. It is a horrible place of fire and brimstone. The souls that are in Hell remain there until the Great White Throne judgment, which is spoken of in Revelation 20:11-25. At that point Hell is emptied and the souls that were in it are judged for their sins – and then they are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15), where they are tormented day and night, forever and ever.

The doctrine of Hell is common knowledge and is well-understood. What is *not* common knowledge is that there are actually two different Hells. There is the Hell that everyone is familiar with, and then there is a separate place called Tartarus.

We find this surprising fact in the book of 2 Peter:

2 Peter 2:4: “For if God spared not **the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell**, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

The word “hell” here is not the normal word for Hell. This is how my Greek lexicon defines it:

Tartaroo: (Strings #5020) Found only in its verbal form in 2 Peter 2:4, meaning to consign to Tartarus (which is neither Sheol of the OT, nor Hades of the NT, nor Gehenna, nor hell, but the place where certain angels are confined, reserved unto judgment). This punishment for these angels is because of their special sin.

As you can see, Peter used a special Greek word that is not used anywhere else in the Bible. The word refers to a separate place of torment that is *not* the usual Hell, but is something different.

In order to find out what is going on we need to study the verse a bit more closely. Peter tells us that when certain angels committed a certain sin, God cast them into Tartarus. There the fallen angels are held captive in chains, and they will remain there until the day of judgment. Tartarus, then, is a special prison that is reserved for certain angels who committed a certain sin. But just who are these angels and what was their sin?

We know that there are many demons that are not confined to Tartarus. These demons roam the Earth and cause tremendous amounts of trouble. However, some demons did something so terrible that their right to roam the Earth was revoked. Instead of being allowed to torment mankind until the day of judgment, they are held captive in utter darkness.

Jude also speaks of this and gives us a bit more information about what sin they committed:

Jude 1:6: “And **the angels** which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved **in everlasting chains under darkness** unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

In verse 6 Jude tells us the same thing that Peter said – that there are certain angels who sinned and were chained in darkness to await Judgment Day. Jude then says that these angels sinned “even as” Sodom and Gomorrha did. What sin did Sodom commit? Well, according to Jude, the citizens of Sodom gave

themselves over to fornication and “strange flesh”. In other words, the sin of Sodom was sexual in nature – *and so was the sin of these angels*. The sin of the angels was “even as” the sin of Sodom.

Does the Bible record a time when certain fallen angels committed a sexual sin? As a matter of fact, it does. We find this in the book of Genesis:

Genesis 6:1: “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That **the sons of God saw the daughters of men** that they were fair; and **they took them wives** of all which they chose.

3 And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

4 **There were giants in the earth in those days;** and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

Here we are told that beings known as the “sons of God” took human women as wives and had children with them. These children became “giants” (literally, nephilim; Strong’s word #5303) and were incredibly powerful creatures. Who were these “sons of God”? Well, that phrase is only found three times in the entire Old Testament, and each time it is used (Job 1:6, Job 2:1, and Job 38:4) it refers to *angels*. Angels are called the sons of God because they were all created directly by God Himself. Genesis 6 tells us that certain fallen angels went after “strange flesh” and had children with human women. That unholy union created the nephilim – strange and powerful creatures that were half-human and half-demon. This was a very terrible sin in the sight of God. Not only did He destroy the nephilim in the Flood, but He

also took the fallen angels who committed this sin and locked them up in Tartarus so they could not do it again.

It may seem strange to us to think of a fallen angel doing such a thing, but it really shouldn't. No one would express amazement if they heard that a demon possessed someone, or murdered someone, or beat someone up, so why are we amazed at the thought that they might commit sexual sins as well? Is that really so hard to believe? It's true that the angels in Heaven do not marry, but we are talking about demonic angels, not Heavenly ones. Demons do a great many things that the angels in Heaven would never dream of doing.

This is not the only time that the nephilim are mentioned in the Bible. The spies that Moses sent out to look over the land of Canaan reported that they saw nephilim there:

Numbers 13:33: “And there **we saw the giants**, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

This time the nephilim were serving as a barrier to keep the Israelites out of Canaan. Satan apparently thought that if he populated Canaan with these powerful giants then that might stop the Israelites from conquering the promised land – but he was wrong. God gave the land over to Israel, and under the leadership of the courageous Joshua they entered Canaan and possessed it.

That was the last time the nephilim are mentioned in the Bible – but it is possible that they might make another appearance in history. Some people have speculated that Satan will attempt this plan once more before the Second Coming. That, however, will be discussed later in the book.