

Reconciling Science and the Bible

Lesson 11: Is there Life after Death?

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Lessons: Reconciling Science and the Bible

1. 7 days of creation
2. In the Beginning (the Big Bang)
3. Did dinosaurs really exist? How old is the Earth?
4. The Existence of God: The Ontological Argument
5. The Existence of God: The Anthropological Argument
6. The Existence of God: The Argument from Logic
7. The Existence of God: The Argument from Intelligent Design
8. What is truth? Is the Bible true and can you trust it?
9. Was Jesus a REAL person?
10. Why does God allow evil to exist?
- 11. Is there life after death?**
12. Is God multidimensional?
13. Living an intentional life!



Afterlife in the Old Testament

- There are passages that deal with life after death in Moses' books
 - Enoch “walked with God” (Gen 5:24)
 - Being “gathered to the Fathers” to be with your people where they are (Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron, Moses, and David)
 - David writes in Psalms that
 - Evil people will be like beasts that perish
 - Righteous will be redeemed by God from the grave (Ps 49:12-20)
 - Daniel refers to the gathering of those who die as if they are awoken from sleep (Dan 12:2)
 - Isaiah promised a resurrection after death (Isa 26:19)

The Old Testament Treatment of Hell

- Not much discussion about a fiery finish for evil people
- Not much discussion about a heavenly finish for good people
- The word “Sheol” is used 64 times in the Old Testament
 - It is rendered “hell” 32 times, “grave” 29 times, and “pit” three times
 - In most cases, it simply means “the place (or state) of the dead”
 - It means a place of retirement for all dead souls, good and bad
 - There is no mention of everlasting torment or fire
- It would not be until the Greeks come on the scene in the New Testament would there be considerable discussion of the disposition of ones who have died

Some Old Testament References

- 1 Sam 22:6 and Ps 18:5 – The cords of the grave coiled around me, the snares of death confronted me
- Job 11:8 – Refers to the “depths below”
- Psalms 86:13 -- “You have delivered me from the depths , from the realm of the dead”
- Isaiah 33:10-17 – “fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”
- Isaiah 66:24 – “look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.”

Greek Thought on the Soul

- You are a soul having a physical existence!
 - You are not a body that has a soul...you are a soul that has a body
 - Your soul is an eternal rider in a corporeal human body.
 - Your soul will live on after your body dies and is buried
- Jesus said the afterlife is a place of torment for the wicked and a place of quiet repose for the faithful
- Both the Greeks and Hebrews reflect upon a 3-part body
 - Body (sarx in Greek and basar in Hebrew) ...your flesh and blood (Gen 2:7)
 - Soul (psyche in Greek and nephesh in Hebrew)...Your personality, intellect, mind, your being
 - Spirit (pneuma in Greek and ruah in Hebrew)...Your “breath”, as when God breathed life into the mud man Adam he had made

Bodies, Spirits and Souls

Plants



- ☒ Body
- ☐ Spirit
- ☐ Soul

Animals



- ☒ Body
- ☒ Spirit
- ☐ Soul

Humans



- ☒ Body
- ☒ Spirit
- ☒ Soul

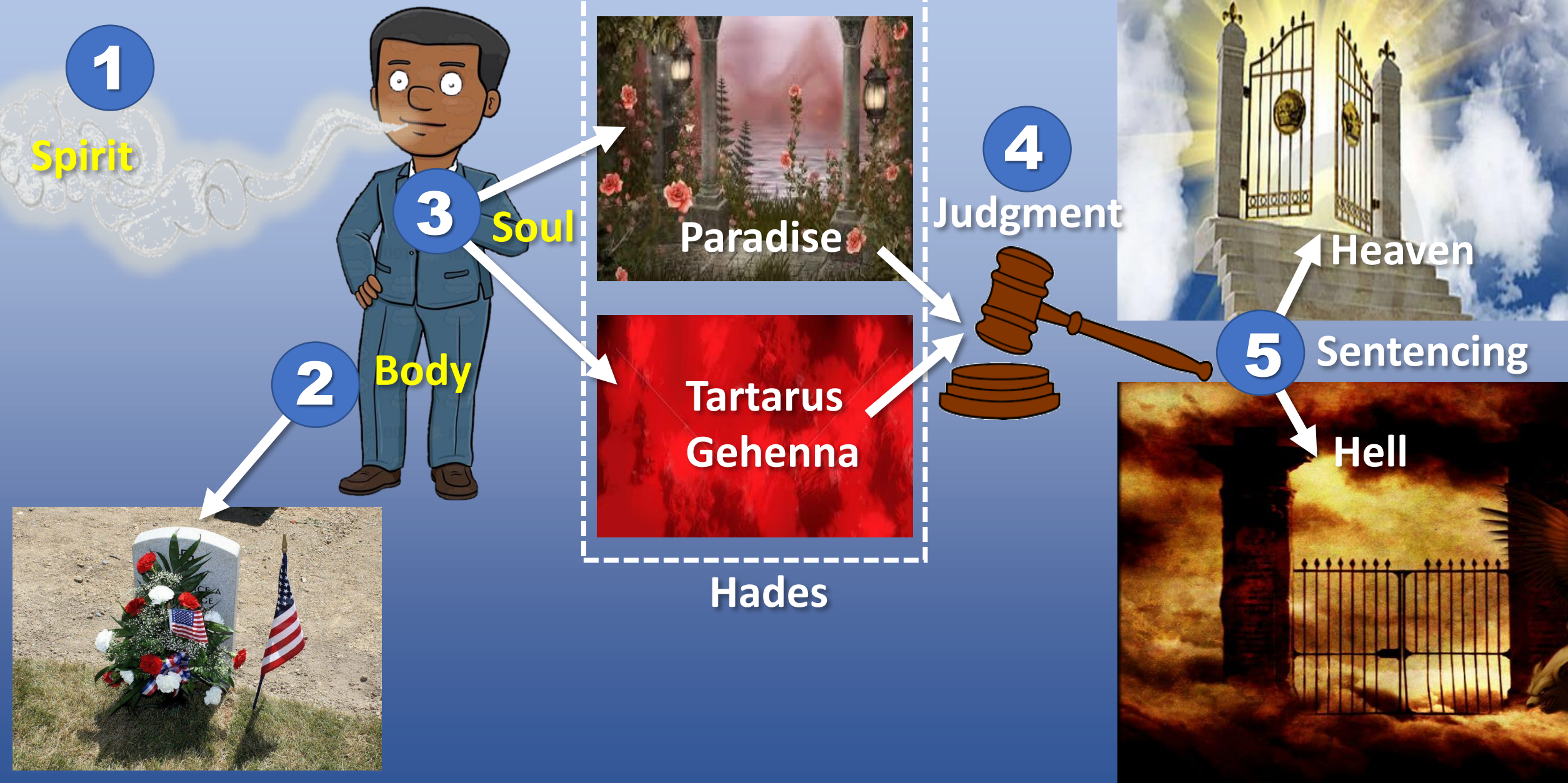
The New Testament Treatment of Hell

- Hell (Hades)
 - Jesus mentions the place more than any other New Testament preacher. 23 times it is used in the KJV, but even he says little about it.
 - It should be noted that the KJV translated three Hebrew words into the one word “Hell”... Here are a few uses for the word Hades:
 - Hades¹ – This is similar to Sheol in the Old Testament and generally means a place where the dead (good and bad) congregate after death.
 - Hades² – A place of torment for the wicked
 - Jesus warned the wicked inhabitants Capernaum would go down into Hades (Matt 11:23)
 - The wicked man in a parable told by Jesus found himself in Hades, a place of torment and anguish (Lk 16:23-24)
 - Hades³ – A place of rest and peace and comfort
 - And at the same time, Jesus’ soul went to Hades upon his death (Acts 2:27-31) which in other places is defined as Paradise (Lk 23:43) or Abraham’s bosom, a place of comfort.

What happens at Death?

- The Body (Greek *sarx*, Hebrew *basar*) will go into the grave and eventually return to the earth
- The Spirit (Greek *pneuma*, Hebrew *ruah*) will leave the body and no longer be the force of life it is, which is evidenced by your breathing
- The Soul (Greek *psyche*, Hebrew *nephesh*), your personality, mind, intellect will go to first to Hades to await judgment and then to Heaven or Hell after the final judgement
 - Your soul will be how we recognize one another in heaven!
 - After Jesus died, he appeared to many who recognized him, but not at first. It was after he talked with them and ate with them did they recognize him.

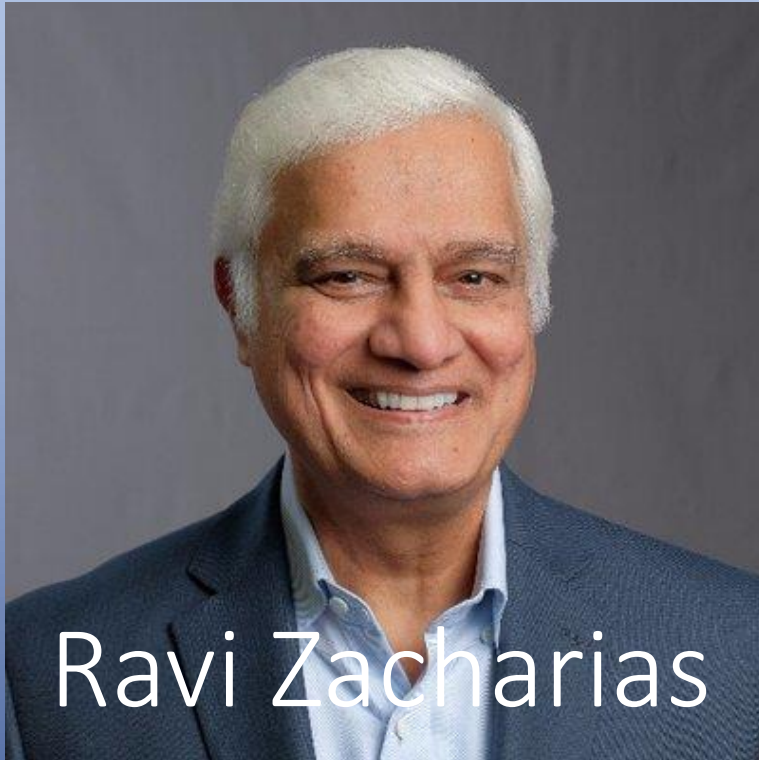
What Happens at Death



Reasons to Believe the Afterlife

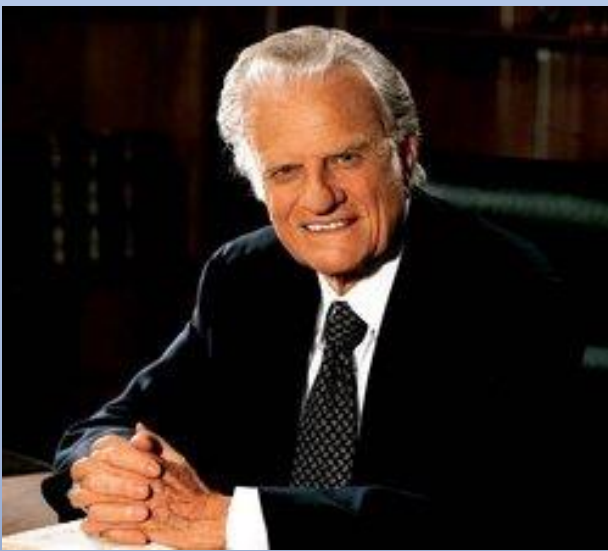
(Note: Some of these are not very Biblical!)

- Christ died and came back to tell us about it (Acts 3:15)
- Virtually all cultures believe in some life after the physical one (Ecc 3:11)
- Many with near-death experiences report their soul appeared to live for a while in a different realm even after the spirit departed the body
- Some (like King Saul) believe in the ability of the dead to come back to this physical plane
- Many believe in haunted places where ghosts, spirits, poltergeists and other bodiless beings exist
- In Jesus' day, spirit demons inhabited the bodies of living people



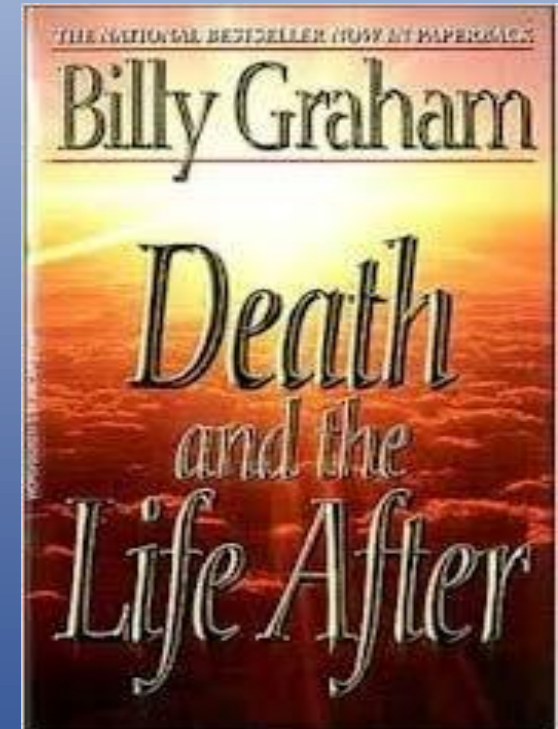
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“Death is the one experience where we
leave behind everything and
take with us everything we are.”



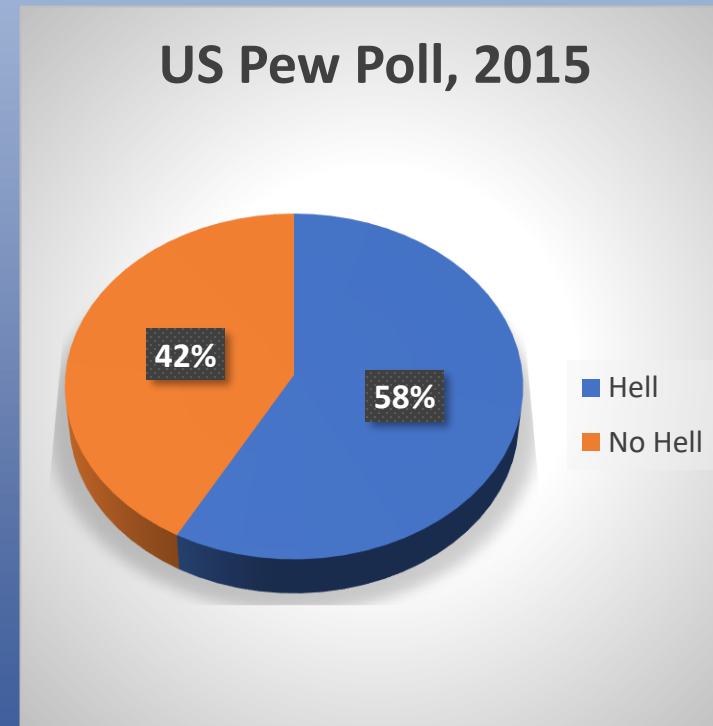
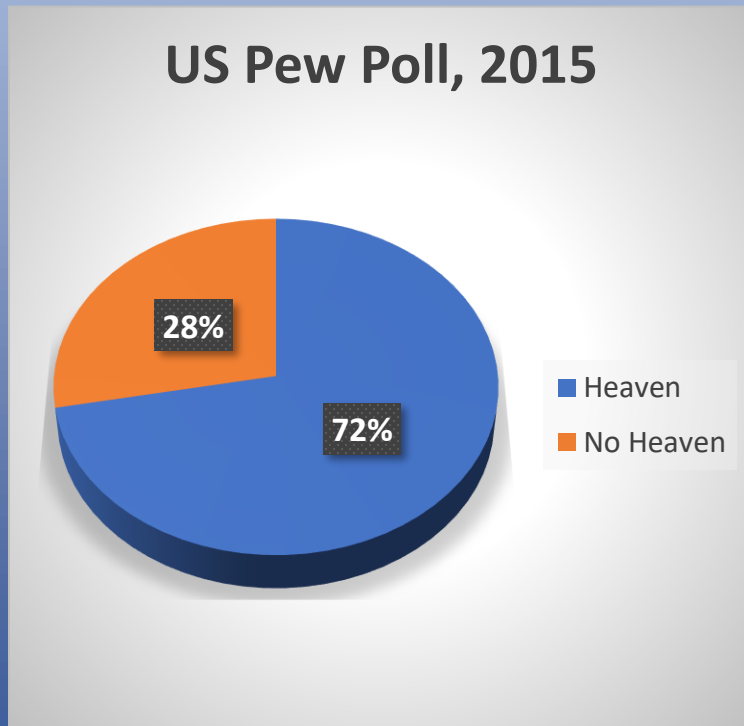
Billy Graham

Our culture trains us to prepare for almost everything but death. Fear and denial are common human responses to the subject, What awaits us beyond this life? It is ... a glorious, spiritual pilgrimage to eagerly anticipate!



A Recent Pew Research Center Poll, 2015

- A poll taken every year on religion and public life
(<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/10/most-americans-believe-in-heaven-and-hell/>)
- Beliefs about the Afterlife, Heaven, and Hell



The Bible on Heaven

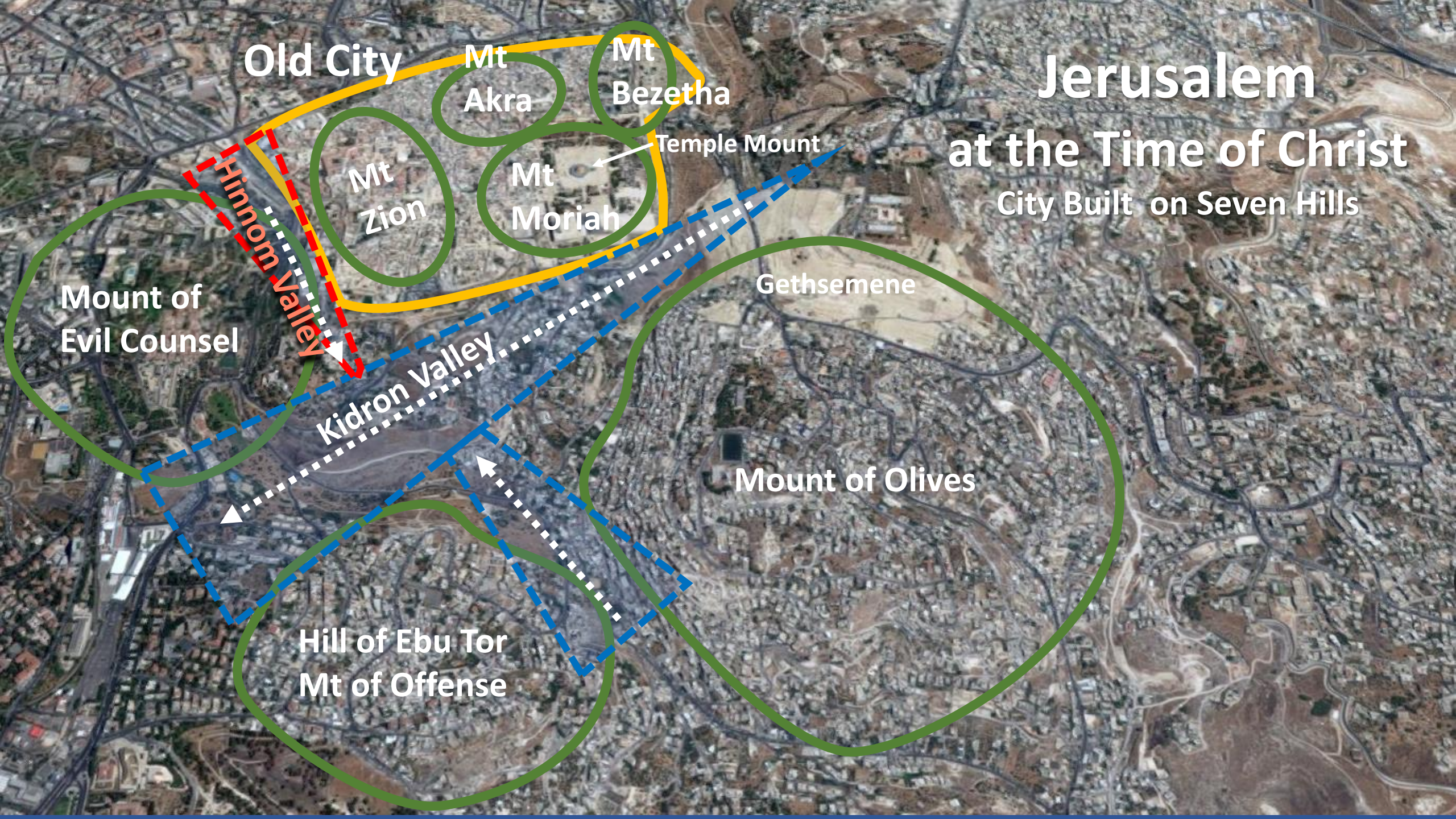
- It is eternal (Heb 11:16; 13:14)
- It is beautiful (Rev 20:2, 10; 22:5) beyond description (gold, jewels, etc.)
- It is a perfect cube (Rev 21:16) as the Holy of Holies in the Temple was
- It is very large (Rev 21:16) 12,000 Stadia or 1,400 miles in each direction
- It has walls (Rev 21: 12) that are 144 cubits or 200 feet thick
- It has twelve gates, each a single pearl, guarded by angels (Rev 21:12-14)
- The foundation has 12 layers each with the name of 12 apostles (Rev 21:14)
- There is no hunger or thirst (Rev 7:16), death or pain (Rev 21:4), crying or mourning (Rev 21:4) or night (Rev 21:23,25)
- It is “the New Heaven and New Earth” (Rev 21:1) for the old earth and old heaven has passed away and there is no longer a sea
- It has the Tree of Life (from the Garden of Eden) Rev 2:7; 22:2-3
- It is what the Most Holy Place in Temple represented (Heb 6:19-20; 9:11, 24)
- Inhabitants are those whose names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Rev 21:27)

The Bible on Hell

- Jesus talked more about Hell than anyone else in the Bible
- In his descriptions, it is a literal place, not figurative
- A place of fire and punishment (Matt 25:41-46)
- A place of darkness, misery, unhappiness, torment (Matt 25:30)
- A place of separation from God which is more painful than the fire
- Jews: When you die, that's it. Sadducees have always taught there is no resurrection after death.
- Islam: Hell is a real place with varying levels. Where you end up depends upon how devout you were while on earth.

Gehenna (Hebrew word for Hell)

- What did they understand Jesus to say when he refer to Gehenna?
 - It is a wordplay between the literal and the symbolic
 - It comes from a place named Gehinnom or the valley of Hinnom
 - It is a valley spanning from the foot of Jerusalem to the Kidron Valley
 - The people would walk to the edge of the city and throw trash down into the deep valley below
 - From their vantage point, they would see fires and smoke and smell the stench of the city's junkyard
 - The fires were kept burning perpetually to mask the scent
 - Only the poorest of the poor would venture there looking for items and possibly food



Old City

Mt
Akra

Mt
Bezetha

Jerusalem

at the Time of Christ

City Built on Seven Hills

Temple Mount

Mt
Zion

Mt
Moriah

Mount of
Evil Counsel

Hinnom Valley

Kidron Valley

Gethsemene

Mount of Olives

Hill of Ebu Tor
Mt of Offense

Relevant Scriptures

- Gen 2 and Rev 22 both seem to say that without access to the Tree of Life which is in heaven, souls will not live forever
- 2 Tim 1:10 says that immortality is a gift given through the gospel to those who believe
- Rom 2:7 teaches that immortality is something to be sought
- Ps 1:6 teaches that those who are ungodly shall perish
- Matt 10:28 teaches that God is the destroyer of souls, someone to be feared who can destroy both body and soul in hell
- John 3:16 says that if you do not believe in him, you will perish, but if you do believe in him, you will have life everlasting
- Rom 6:23 says the wages of sin is death (not just physical death as even the sinless Jesus had to go through physical death). The wages of sin is death after the physical death everyone experiences.
- 1 Thess 1:9 says evil ones will be punished by everlasting destruction
- James 4:12 says there is one lawgiver who is able to both save and destroy
- Ps 49:12-20 tells a story in which evil people will perish like beasts (who have no souls) yet the good person will live forever