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## Can You Be Saved After You Die?

### Description

This article is the 3rd part of a 9 part series on Universal Restoration vs Eternal Torment (hell). I recommend reading [the introduction](#) first if you haven't already. (*link below*)

1. [Universal Restoration vs Eternal Torment \(hell\) introduction](#)
2. [The Biggest Hole in Hell: Aion, Ages and Eternity](#)
3. Can you be saved after you die? (**You are here**)
4. [So let's talk a little bit about the word "hell"](#)
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### Postmortem Salvation?

The interesting thing about the Universal Restoration position is that it keeps everything you know about doctrine and the the end times intact. The only difference is that Universalists say that unbelievers can be saved after death and judgment. They are thrown into the lake of fire until they repent for their wickedness and turn to God for salvation.

**Basically it's the exact same thing believers on earth do. The only real difference is Universal Restoration says this can happen AFTER you die.**

Universal Restoration says that sooner or later, everyone will repent and all mankind will be saved. The basic line of reasoning is "that given enough time" everyone will eventually come to the end of themselves and realize they need God. If you can be saved after you die, then eventually, everyone will come to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But that can't possibly be right? I mean, God can't be that good can He? Besides, the Gospel is only for the living right? There's no place where the Gospel is preached to the dead is there?

### The Gospel Preached to the Dead

Well, actually!

## 1 Peter 3:18-20

**18** For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

**19** in which also **He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,**

**20** **who once were disobedient,** when the patience of God kept waiting **in the days of Noah,** during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

Peter takes a short rabbit trail to discuss baptism and then returns to the topic several verses later:

## 1 Peter 4:6

**6** **For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead,** that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

I want to point out a few things about this passage.

**First**, the Gospel has been preached to the dead at least once. The Universalists would argue that it happened once, so why couldn't it happen again? I'm not saying it will happen again, but this verse leaves the possibility open.

**Second**, who was the gospel preached to?

Verses 19-20 say it was to the *“spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah”*. So if we go with the obvious answer from the context, we're talking about the unrighteous from Noah's generation.

Here's what God said about them.

## Genesis 6:5-8

**5** Then the LORD saw that **the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

**6** The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

**7** The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for **I am sorry that I have made them.**"

**8** But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Obviously they aren't believers or righteous men.

There's no need to preach the Gospel to those who are saved and I can't think of any scriptures where the Gospel was preached to those who were already saved. Jesus Himself said:

### **Mark 2:16-17**

**16** When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

**17** And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

So why would He preach to those who are (*spiritually*) well?

The context makes it sound like we're talking about Noah's generation too. So wouldn't the target audience then be the (*spiritually*) sick/dead, aka the unsaved?

Maybe?

**Third**, it says that "though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit." Please notice the contrast here. We're talking about men "who once were disobedient" and were "judged in the flesh as men." These don't sound like believers or even people who followed God in Old Testament. However, despite that they can now "live in the spirit." That sounds like unsaved people getting saved to me.

### **Jesus leading a "Host of captives" out of "hell"?**

That's made even more possible by a verse in Ephesians.

### **Ephesians 4:8-9**

**8** Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that **He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?**

It says He led a "Host of captives," but captives from where? Perhaps they were the "the spirits now in prison" mentioned in Peter? They would certainly qualify as captives. This verse in Ephesians mentions the "lower parts of the earth," which is an obvious euphemism for the underworld; i.e., the place of the dead. So Jesus led a host of captives out of the underworld, and these captives include at least the wicked men of Noah's day.

I will admit that there's some uncertainty in this verse. It's not perfectly clear, but I can't think of anyone else it could be.

Orthodox Christianity has long held that Jesus descended into "hell." The Apostles' Creed has been used by the Church for well over a thousand years, though it changed slightly since its inception. The earliest reference to it dates back to 390 AD. Some have argued for an earlier date around 180 AD.

It includes this:

- I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
  - who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
  - and born of the virgin Mary.
  - He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
  - was crucified, died, and was buried;
  - **He descended to hell.**
  - The third day he rose again from the dead.
  - He ascended to heaven
  - and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
  - From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Jesus' descent into "hell" was important enough for the early church fathers to include on their basic statement of faith. That doesn't make it infallible of course and they could've been wrong. However, Jesus' descent into hell is one of the few things that Universalists and Eternal Torment supporters agree on.

So there is definitely some support for Jesus preaching the Gospel for the dead and them going to heaven afterward. It's not iron clad, but it's definitely there.

### Sins being forgiven after death?

And speaking of salvation after death, Isaiah says something very interesting.

**Isaiah 22:12-14**

**12** Therefore in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called you to weeping, to wailing, To shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth.

**13** Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, Eating of meat and drinking of wine: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die.”

**14** But the LORD of hosts revealed Himself to me, “Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you **Until you die**,” says the Lord GOD of hosts.

Here is the single most difficult verse to explain away from the Eternal Torment position.

**This verse seems absolutely clear that God can forgive sins *after* someone dies.**

I don't see another way to take it.

If I say to my child: “You won't get ice cream until you clean your room” there is an implied promise. The implied promise is that getting ice cream is possible once they have cleaned their room. It's not guaranteed, but it's now possible. In simple contract terms it states that once a condition has been met you can get something, though that doesn't necessarily mean you will get it.

For the child, the condition is getting their room clean. For the evildoers in Isaiah, the condition is death.

Universal Restoration would argue that the implied promise in this passage is absolute proof that you can be saved (*forgiven*) after you die. They would argue that God is saying “You can be forgiven, but I'll only forgive you after you die.”

I think that interpretation fits without twisting the scriptures.

On the other hand, I can't think of a way Eternal Torment could interpret this passage that doesn't twist the meaning. The implied promise is definitely there. I've racked my brain trying to figure a way to see this verse from the Eternal Torment position. I still don't see one, but it might be out there. If it is, I'm apparently not good enough to find it or smart enough to think of it.

**Again, it seems clear from this verse that God can forgive sins after someone dies.**

I don't see another way to read it.

(If you think of one, send me an email from the [contact page](#).)

**There's another side to this argument though.**

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The first part is found in Hebrews, the second part is in a parable that Jesus told.

## Once to die and after that the judgement

Let's talk about Hebrews first.

### Hebrews 9:27-28

**27** And **inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,**

**28** so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

The Eternal Torment supporters say that *appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment* means that after the judgment is the end; once you're dead you are lost if you are unsaved.

However, after judgement comes punishment or reward depending on the state of your spirit. So at the very least, we know that something comes after judgement. (*punishment or reward*)

The Universalist might respond *it can say it is appointed to man once to be born and after this comes death. However, we know that there's life after death. So why can't there be something after judgment?*

They would also say that some died and have waited a long time for this Great White throne Judgment. Therefore, since there is something between death and judgment (*at least 2000 years in some case*) then there could be something after judgment.

We know the Gospel was preached to the dead once. What's to stop it from happening again? I'm not saying it will be, but it's a reasonable point the Universal Restoration position has and I don't have a good answer for it from the Eternal Torment supporters.

We do know this:

### Revelation 1:17-18

**17** When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, *Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,*

**18** and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and **I have the keys of death and of Hades.**

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Jesus says he has the keys of death and Hades. That would imply He can do whatever He wants with them. It doesn't say that explicitly, but it's not stretching things to say He can.

Anyway, moving on.

## The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man

Now, the biggest place in the Bible where people go to say that Universal Restoration isn't true or that you can't be saved after death is in Luke. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees and He launches into a parable.

### Luke 16:19-31

**19** "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

**20** "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

**21** and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

**22** "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

**23** "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

**24** "And he cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame."

**25** "But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

**26** "And besides all this, **between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.**"

**27** "And he said, "Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house

**28** for I have five brothers -in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

29 “But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.”

30 “But he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!”

31 “But he said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, **they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.**”

If we take this parable as a literal story about “heaven and hell”, then there’s a rather strange thing we must accept as true. We must believe that we can talk to our unsaved friends and family from across this “Great Chasm”. If we take this story literally, we must accept this as a fact.

However, I have never met (*or heard of*) an Eternal Torment supporter who believed that was the case.

Regardless, it’s unclear what happens if we take this parable literally because we already know that Jesus made a “*proclamation to the spirits now in prison who once were disobedient*”. Even the most orthodox Christian alive won’t deny that refers either to “hell” or possibly a “compartment in hell for the righteous”.

So at least Jesus can cross that “Great Chasm”.

Jesus also has the Keys of Death and Hades, so could Jesus lead people across this Great Chasm?

Maybe?

I don’t think there’s enough to go on here. However, we do know that Jesus definitely preached the Gospel to the dead. So I think it’s definitely possible that Jesus “who crossed that “Great Chasm” once “ could also cross it again. I’m not saying that He will, just that it’s possible.

**Is this parable literal?**

I don’t think this parable is literal because there’s more going on than meets the eye at first glance.

**To clarify, I am NOT saying this parable CAN’T be literally describing life after death.**

I am saying that there’s more to this parable than meets the eye. And even if it is literal, there are still some cool things we can learn. However, I lean toward parables not being literal because of Jesus’ words to the disciples.

**Matthew 13:10-14**

**10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”**

11 Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

12 "For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

13 "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

Jesus He was purposely speaking in parables so that "while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand". It certainly *could* be literal.

**However, no one argues that the rest of Jesus' parables are literal, so why is this one special?**

**Lazarus and the rich man: real people?**

A few people think this was an actual event and Lazarus and the rich man were real historical people. The Greek construction of the passage makes that impossible.

### Luke 16:19-31

19 "Now there was **a** rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

20 "And **a** poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

The words I've highlighted above are the Greek Indefinite Pronoun "tis". It's similar to our English word "a/an" is used to indicate that something is *non-specific*. For example "It's a book" means it is **not** a specific book, but just some book (*any book*). Likewise, in this passage it's **not** a specific Rich Man and a **not** specific beggar named Lazarus. Rather, it's just *some/any* rich man and *some/any* beggar named Lazarus.

**So no, the rich man and Lazarus weren't real historical people.**

That doesn't mean this verse can't describe the afterlife. However we know we're not talking about real people here. Jesus always uses the indefinite pronoun "tis" in His parables. He opens almost every single one of them the same way: "There was a (tis)

man/sower/son/etcâ€• to indicate itâ€™s not a specific person, but just â€œsome/anyâ€• person.

Itâ€™s the same with this parable.

(Iâ€™ll explain the reason the poor man was named Lazarus near the end of the article.)

### The context

Further, the meaning of this parable changes rather drastically if you look at the context. For starters, letâ€™s consider the biblical context. (Which is *always a good idea*) This whole passage starts in Luke Chapter 15 verse 1.

#### Luke 15:1-2

1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.

2 **Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble**, saying, â€œThis man receives sinners and eats with them.â€•

Jesus responds by telling three parables; the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the prodigal son. I could be wrong, but it sounds like Jesus was correcting their attitude towards sinners.

He then starts chapter 16 by telling the parable of the unrighteous steward, which finishes in verse 16:13. The next verse is very telling.

#### Luke 16:14

14 Now the **Pharisees** â€“ who were lovers of money â€“ **were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.**

So we know the Pharisees were right there listening. Itâ€™s also likely the entire passage from 15:3 onward was directed at the Pharisees.

The Pharisees started this whole exchange by complaining that Jesus was talking and eating with sinners. Jesus responds by telling the parables about finding whatâ€™s lost; a not-so-subtle condemnation of their attitude. He then tells the parable of the unrighteous steward, which is about loving money. Again, a not-so-subtle condemnation of the Pharisees.

They scoffed at his parables, so Jesus takes it up a notch further in verse 15 by rebuking them directly. Finally, he uses the parable of Lazarus and the rich man

It's also worth noting that after this parable are these two verses.

### Luke 17:1-2

1 He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!

2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.

It sounds like this whole section is about the Pharisees, or at the very least directed **AT** the Pharisees.

### The Rich Man

Now let's look at the parable itself and we'll start with the rich man.

### Luke 16:19

19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

The "purple and fine linen" bit means something if you know about the Old Testament sacrificial system and its priests.

### Exodus 28:4-6

4 "These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.

5 "They shall take the gold and the blue and the purple and the scarlet material and the fine linen.

6 "They shall also make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of the skillful workman.

Very important: Aaron was the first High Priest of Israel.

What did he wear?

He wore his "work uniform" which was designed by God Himself. Whenever he did His priestly duties, (*which was a LOT*) he had to wear his work uniform. The Ephod (*tunic*) in Exodus was made with Red, blue and purple thread. Red and blue mixed makes purple, so I imagine the whole thing would've looked purple. So you could say that Aaron would have been "habitually dressed in purple and fine linen."

Sound familiar?

The purple and fine linen described the Priestly garments. So it's reasonable to think Jesus was describing a priest. But let's go further.

### Exodus19:6

**6** and **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests** and a holy nation.™ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

God here identifies that the ENTIRE NATION of Israel were "a kingdom of priests" and there's still more. Check out this next passage. Here, Jesus (*as usual*) is speaking to the Jews.

### John 8: 38-39

**38** "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

**39** **They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father"** Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham."

The important part is who the Jews identified as their father. They said, "Abraham is our father!"

Just like the rich man in the parable.

### Luke16:24

**24** "And he cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.™"

There's one more clue to the rich man that shouldn't be missed. For this one, we need to go all the way back to Genesis. It's part of a chunk that records which of Jacob's wives gave birth to which children.

**Genesis 35:23**

**23** the sons of Leah: **Reuben**, Jacob's firstborn, then **Simeon** and **Levi** and **Judah** and **Issachar** and **Zebulun**;

So Leah had six boys. Unless my kindergarten math is failing me, then each of those boys would've had five brothers! just like the rich man in the parable.

**Luke 16:27-28**

**27** "And he said, "Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house"

**28** for **I have five brothers** -in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Hmm, Jesus is called the "Lion of Judah" and Judah had five brothers!

**Further, the High Priest during Jesus day (Caiaphas) had five brothers too.** This doubles up at this parable being aimed at the pharisees, the priests, and possibly the whole nation of Israel.

But there's one more clue to the identity of the rich man:

**Luke 16:27-29**

**27** "And he said, "Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house"

**28** for I have five brothers -in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

**29** "But Abraham said, "They have **Moses and the Prophets**; let them hear them."

So we know that the rich man's brothers "have *Moses and the Prophets*". Certainly at this time the only people who had Moses and the Prophets were the Jews.

Just to recap:

- The rich man wore purple and fine linen, which was the garb of Israelite Priests.
- God said the entire Jewish nation was His "kingdom of priests"
- The Jews identified Abraham as their father, and so did the rich man.

- The rich man had five brothers, just as all of Leah's children did
  - The high priest during Jesus day also had five brothers.
- The five brothers had Moses and the Prophets, which only the Jews had.

### **Could it be that the Rich man in the parable wasn't a one man, but rather represented the Entire Nation of Israel?**

The symbolism is there.

And I don't think the Pharisees could **ever** have missed the symbolism. I did hours of research to find all this stuff, but this was their life. They knew the intricate details of the law better than anyone. I think it's impossible that they would've missed it.

### **But if the Rich man represents Israel, then what about the Lazarus?**

**Who was Lazarus?**

Let's take a look.

#### **Luke 16:29**

**20** And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

**21** and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the **dogs were coming and licking his sores.**

This is important because of the Jewish view of the Gentiles. They were outside the promises of God, and didn't have access to the richness of God's love and grace. They were viewed as "dogs" unfit for the things of God.

Even Jesus used the "Gentiles are dogs" analogy at one point.

#### **Matthew 15:22-28**

**22** And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."

**23** But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."

24 But He answered and said, *“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*

25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, *“Lord, help me!”*

26 And He answered and said, *“It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”*

27 But she said, *“Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”*

28 Then Jesus said to her, *“O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.”* And her daughter was healed at once

First, notice He healed her daughter. But second notice He talked about taking children’s bread and throwing it to the dogs.

Notice:

- The woman says *“even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”*
- And Lazarus was *“longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table.”*

**I think the symbolism for Lazarus representing the Gentiles is certainly there.**

If I’m right, it casts the entire parable in a whole new light.

**The parable’s actual point?**

Because the Jews rejected the gospel, the gentiles now have access to it. The Jews rejected Jesus and thus are now in the same place that the gentiles were in because they don’t have Him (*Jesus*).

Further, their history since Jesus came (*and especially since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD*) is one long string of bad events one after another. The most recent is the holocaust, but there are plenty of terrible things in the Jewish history books. Couldn’t it rightly be said they are now in very real spiritual agony and torment after rejecting the Messiah?

**Remember, Jesus was directing this whole Parable at the Pharisees.**

I think *“and I could be wrong”* but I think this whole parable isn’t about what happens when you die. I think it’s a picture, prophecy, and warning to the Pharisees what was about to happen to them spiritually when they rejected Christ.

And the "Great Chasm" between the Jews and Christians exists to this day. It's not common for someone to convert between the two faiths. We also don't cooperate very much. And just to put the finishing touch on this parable, let's look at how it ends.

### Luke 16:27-31

27 "And he said, "Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house"

28 for I have five brothers -in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

29 "But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them."

30 "But he said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!"

31 "But he said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead."

According to bible-history.com, Jesus spoke this parable in the same month in which He raised Lazarus from the dead.

**In fact, they believe that this parable happened just days or weeks after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead!**

Jesus was really hammering it home in this passage about their unbelief. I think the symbolism is very clear. Also remember that this is a parable. Parables are almost never actual events, but rather they are stories to explain a point. So I think this is an allegory showing what happened spiritually to Israel after Christ.

**Put simply, I think this parable is just that; A Parable. Nothing more; nothing less.**

The use of the Greek indefinite pronoun "tis" (tis) makes this even more clear in my mind. It's how Jesus opens most of His parables including this one. Again, that makes me think this is a parable: a fictional story told to illustrate a point, which is exactly what Jesus was doing.

I could be wrong though.

Maybe Jesus was really telling a story about heaven and hell and there really is a Great Chasm between the two. Maybe Jesus meant both were true and His parable had a double meaning.

But I tend to think this was a parable.

From the viewpoint of Universal Restoration, the response is to point out that Jesus lead captive a host of captives when He ascended on high. The idea being that while no man can cross the chasm by their own determination, Jesus can lead others across it because He has the keys of death and

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Hades.

## Conclusion

There is no verse in the Bible that says you can't be saved. Or if there is, I haven't seen it and couldn't find it.

There's Isaiah 22:12-14 which seems to indicate that God does forgive sins after death. I don't see another way to take the passage.

The Gospel has been preached to the dead, and "in context" those dead were the wicked of Noah's generation who the Jews believed were the most wicked generation that ever lived.

Further, the parable of Lazarus and the Rich man is just that; a parable. I suppose it could refer to the afterlife, but when read in context I don't see how.

Putting all that together, it seems like you can be saved after you die. Again, salvation only comes through repentance and faith in Jesus' work on the cross and His shed blood. According to Universalism (*the non-heretical version*) the "lake of fire" is what God uses to bring unrepentant hearts to Himself in the afterlife if they don't come to Him in this life.

Interestingly, the word "hell" doesn't mean what you think it does! which is what we'll talk about next.

The next article in this series is: [So let's talk a little bit about the word "hell"](#)