

Salvation Message in Acts (I)

*Continuing from the Gospels
Re-Offer of the Kingdom to Israel*

(This article deals with the salvation message seen throughout the Book of Acts, a salvation message previously seen beginning with Moses and subsequently continued in the epistles, with the salvation in this message ultimately realized following time and events referenced in the Book of Revelation.

For companion articles, refer to:

“Salvation Message in the Gospels” (I, II)

“Salvation Message in Acts” (II)

“Salvation Message in the Epistles” (I, II)

“Salvation Realized in Revelation”

Events during time covered by the Book of Acts (from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.) center around *the inception of the Church and the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation of Israel.*

The newly formed Church — *the one new man* “in Christ” — *was NOW the repository of the kingdom* (Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10) and was the entity which God used to convey the message during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (with other saved Jews later helping those comprising *the one new man* to reach the nation with the message).

The original offer was made during about a three and one-half-year period, covered by the four gospels.

And *the re-offer* was made during about thirty succeeding years, covered by the Book of Acts.

Properly understanding the re-offer of the kingdom in Acts is dependent on properly understanding the previous offer in the gospels. And properly understanding the previous offer in the gospels is dependent on properly understanding the place which the kingdom occupies throughout the Old Testament, beginning with Moses in the opening chapters of Genesis.

Individuals invariably go wrong in the gospels, leading into Acts, and in Acts, leading into the epistles, when they attempt to understand and interpret these parts of Scripture apart from preceding Scripture, apart from the Old Testament.

And this is the primary reason individuals erroneously attempt to teach salvation by grace from numerous New Testament passages which have *NOTHING* to do with this message (e.g., being brought forth from above in the account of Nicodemus in John 3 [*ref.* to the author's article, "Jesus Conversation with Nicodemus"], parables in the gospels, signs in the gospels and Acts, Peter's message to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2...).

Scripture *MUST ALWAYS* be understood and interpreted in the light of the *EXACT* wording of the text, within its contextual setting, *NEVER* through any type secondary means which either ignores or does away with the *EXACT* wording of the text and/or separates the text from its contextual setting.

Understanding the Proclaimed Message

The Old Testament is replete with information concerning *BOTH heavenly and earthly promises and blessings associated with two spheres of the kingdom, the present status of the kingdom, etc.* And any type misunderstanding about the proffered kingdom by the Jewish people throughout the gospels and Acts *could ONLY have been the result of failure, over time, on the part of their religious leaders.*

(Throughout both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom, during the time covered by the gospels and Acts, the Pharisees, with the Pharisaical Scribes — the largest of the religious sects in Israel — because of their very numbers, held sway over the religious life of the people.

And this would account for *the WHY* of Jesus' words in Matt. 23, at the end of three and one-half years, at the end of the offer of the kingdom to Israel, as seen in the gospel accounts.

Note in this chapter where these Jewish religious leaders' opposition to and antagonism toward both the Messenger and His message *had taken NOT ONLY themselves BUT the nation as a whole*:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men [‘in front of men,’ *i.e.*, in their presence, in the presence of the people]: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in...

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" [vv. 13, 34-39].)

And to fully understand the harshness of Christ's condemnation of these religious leaders, matters *MUST* be taken back to times preceding the three and one-half-year ministry of Jesus and His disciples, to times extending back to at least Abraham's day, covering 2,000 years of Jewish history.

Numerous saints in the Old Testament, looking beyond the earthly kingdom — in days both before the theocracy and during the theocracy — manifested an interest in things having to do with the heavenly kingdom. They took their eyes off the present, and looked out into the future, *believing that God would ultimately bring to pass that which He had promised.*

Note, in this respect, Abraham's walk *by faith* in Heb. 11:8-16.

Two things stand out above everything else:

- 1) The promise of *an earthly inheritance.*
- 2) The promise of *a better inheritance*, "that is, an *heavenly.*"

It is clear from verses 10-16 that *NOT ONLY* did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob desire the heavenly inheritance above the earthly, *BUT* so did many other saints during Old Testament times (vv. 9, 32-40).

And it is also clear from passages such as Matt. 8:11 and Luke 13:28 that these saints in the Old Testament who passed through their pilgrim walk, *by faith*, looking beyond the earthly inheritance to the heavenly, *WILL one day realize this heavenly inheritance.*

WHERE did these individuals during Old Testament times learn these things?

Many of these individuals lived centuries before the Spirit of God moved Moses to begin recording things about a heavenly inheritance and promises (Abraham, five centuries preceding Moses' day).

Yet, they knew about these things and governed their lives accordingly.

Again, *WHERE* did these Old Testament saints preceding Moses' day learn these things?

There, of course, is *ONLY ONE* answer. *God could ONLY have made these things known to them.*

THEN, there are the Jewish people during the 1,500 years extending from Moses to Christ, a people in possession of Moses' writings, progressively coming into possession of more and more revelation over the next 1,000 years.

And for the next 500 to 400 years, though in the diaspora, *they were in possession of the complete Old Testament canon.*

And, as seen in the latter part of Heb. 11, many of these individuals looked out ahead to the same thing that many others during days preceding Moses had looked, beyond the earthly to heavenly promises and blessings.

Thus, during almost 1,500 years of time, God had made known to the Jewish nation, through Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, numerous things about the kingdom which the nation should have known when John the Baptist appeared on the scene, and subsequently Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy.

The message beginning with John, then Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy — apart from mainly some of the parables — was essentially delivered *apart from any explanation pertaining to the kingdom itself.*

The miraculous signs provided an inseparable and inherent connection between Israel and the proffered kingdom. And the signs, as the message itself, *were performed in an unexplained manner as well.*

The message was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand." And this message was accompanied by supernatural signs (e.g., Matt. 4:17, 23, 24; 8:1ff; 9:1ff; 10:1ff).

And when Peter began the re-offer of the kingdom to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, or the manner in which the re-offer of the kingdom continued throughout the Acts period — covering about thirty years — *EXACTLY* the same situation existed concerning this message.

(Peter, on the day of Pentecost, and others following, *DIDN'T* even have to mention the kingdom, *per se*. The Jewish religious leaders *ALREADY KNEW* what the message was about, which provides the central reason for the continued opposition and persecution.

And this had all been done, and was continuing to be done, by individuals who had known/knew Christ's true identity [Matt. 21:37, 38a], which was why they had crucified Him (vv. 38b, 39).

There was ONLY ONE message — whether in the four gospels or in Acts — which needed NO explanation.

For information on the “signs” seen throughout the gospels and Acts, refer to the author's article, “Signs, Wonders, Miracles.”)

Then, in the re-offer of the kingdom in Acts, certain things about the kingdom formed a part of the message (*e.g.*, calling attention to Joel's prophecy in relation to that which was occurring [ch. 2], or calling attention to that future day when all will be restored [ch. 3].

And in the re-offer of the kingdom, particularly up to the time of Stephen's death in chapter seven, there is a heavy emphasis on the fact that Israel had previously *NOT ONLY* rejected the message *BUT* had crucified the Messenger. Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom and had crucified their King.

BUT, the absence of an accompanying clarification or an explanation concerning the proffered kingdom itself (the kingdom of the heavens), along with the accompanying

signs, *continued in Acts as it had throughout the gospels — unchanged.*

And there is a simple explanation concerning *WHY the message needed NO clarification or explanation.*

As previously seen, numerous Old Testament saints possessed a knowledge of the kingdom proclaimed to Israel throughout the gospels and Acts, aspiring to one day have a part in heavenly promises and blessings, governing their lives accordingly.

By the same token, the Jewish people at the time of Christ's first coming should have possessed the same knowledge about this kingdom. They should have immediately understood the subject being dealt with and exhibited the same attitude as numerous Jews preceding them had exhibited relative to these promises and blessings, going all the way back to Abraham.

NO explanation should have been needed, particularly for the Jewish people at Christ's first coming. *ALL of the data surrounding the subject of the message had already been given.*

The data had been given through some thirty or more different men during a period of about 1,000 years (abt. 1400-400 B.C.; from Genesis to Malachi). And the Jewish religious leaders possessed copies of that complete record, allowing them to study and make this revelation known to the people.

In short, WHY spend time explaining something that had already been explained, particularly since the complete explanation required volumes of data?

This would be similar to Christ's return and ensuing events in the Book of Revelation dealt with in a rather succinct manner.

WHY is this?

The whole of Scripture, covering 6,000 years of Man's Day, has been building toward this event, but it is dealt with in the final book of Scripture *in a succinct manner.*

Again, WHY?

The answer is *the SAME* as the reason for the lack of explanation about the kingdom in the camp of Israel 2,000 years ago.

ALL of the data pertaining to Christ's return, *EXACTLY* as *ALL* the data pertaining to the inseparably related kingdom, *had ALREADY been given*. *It was given different places in the same volumes covering the kingdom, extending into the New Testament.*

Thus, anything other than a succinct statement, *apart from explanation*, would be entirely unnecessary in the Book of Revelation.

And anything other than a succinct statement — “Repent Ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” — apart from explanation, *could ONLY have been considered entirely unnecessary, leaving the Jewish people completely WITHOUT excuse* when John the Baptist appeared on the scene, followed by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy.

And, when moving on into Acts and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, even a mention of the “kingdom” itself, as seen throughout the gospels, was deemed unnecessary.

Note that the first appearance of the word “kingdom” in Acts does not even appear until the eighth chapter (v. 12).

The Jewish religious leaders *well KNEW* what the message involved. They *had KNOWN* this during the original offer; they *had KNOWN* what they were rejecting and Who they were rejecting and crucifying.

And *this SAME mindset* is carried over into the re-offer of the kingdom in Acts.

BUT, despite their religious leaders' continued opposition to what was occurring, thousands of Jews believed the message, particularly during about the first year or two of the re-offer (e.g., Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7).

This though was *NOT* to continue. The thousands who had believed the message during this time, or those who believed during succeeding years, represented only a small fraction of the complete nation.

The re-offer of the kingdom was to end the same way that the previous offer had ended.

The re-offer was to end by the nation once again rejecting the offer (*e.g.*, note the climactic rejection by Israel's religious leaders in Rome at the termination of the re-offer in Acts 28:17-29 [*cf.* Matt. 21:33-45]), *leaving the desolate house where it remains today and will continue to remain UNTIL that seen in the closing verse of Matthew chapter twenty-three comes to pass:*

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (vv. 38, 39).

(Note that *THIS*, of necessity, *leaves ALL Jews in ALL subsequent generations occupying EXACTLY the same position as Jews at the time of Christ's first coming.* The passage of generations *means NOTHING in this respect* [*cf.* Zech. 12:10, “whom they have pierced”).

Also note where *THIS leaves ALL Christians today*, where it leaves the present recipients of the message pertaining to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

Individuals during O.T. days, even apart from Moses' writings, knew things that so many Christians today *DON'T* seem to have any understanding of at all, though *Christians today are NOT ONLY in possession of Moses' writings, BUT the Psalms, the Prophets and the N.T. as well, providing even MORE explanatory data.*)

“Repent Ye,” “Repent, and Be Baptized”

The message proclaimed to Israel, beginning with John

in the offer of the kingdom in the gospels, along with the results, was:

“Repent ye [a plural pronoun, the entire nation]: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand...

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 3:2, 5, 6).

THIS is the SAME message that was continued by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy, with the results — because of Israel’s religious leaders — increasingly moving more toward the Cross than toward the Crown, the proffered kingdom (Matt. 4:17ff; 10:1ff; Luke 10:1ff).

THEN, the continuing message in the re-offer of the kingdom is seen beginning in Acts chapter two.

The message was the SAME as before, with similar attendant results:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you [the entire nation] in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (vv. 38, 41).

However, particularly during the first year or two of the re-offer of the kingdom, prior to the call for repentance and baptism, the message usually dealt heavily *on HOW the previous offer in the gospel accounts had ended.*

The Jewish people had previously rejected *NOT ONLY* the message *BUT* the Messenger as well.

And, rejecting the Messenger, they had cried out for His crucifixion, ascribing allegiance to a pagan Gentile king in the process.

They had rejected “the Prince of life” (Acts 3:15), *choosing in His place what could ONLY have been the opposite, a prince associated with death.*

Thus, in the re-offer of the kingdom, preceding the call for repentance and baptism, the Jewish people’s attention was usually directed toward that which the nation had done, along with the fact that God raised the One Whom Israel had crucified from the dead, placing Him at His right hand, *UNTIL...* (e.g., Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-21; 4:8-22; 5:29-33; 6:8-14; 7:51-54).

In this respect, the subsequent message in Acts, though dealt with in a different manner, was *THE SAME*.

The SAME kingdom was in view, the SAME offer was being continued, and the SAME message was being proclaimed — national repentance, followed by baptism.

There was absolutely NO difference, there COULDN’T have been.

1) Repentance

National repentance was required because of centuries of covenantal disobedience, dating, in one respect, all the way back to the inception of the nation during Moses’ day, over fourteen centuries earlier.

(Covenantal disobedience had to do with a failure to keep the terms of the covenant given through Moses at Sinai.

This covenant [a conditional covenant], dependent on the previous Abrahamic covenant [an unconditional covenant], had to do with *the rules and regulations governing the Jewish people within the theocracy.*

Note Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 with respect to God’s promises and warnings concerning what He would do *IF* Israel kept the covenant on the one hand *OR* what He would instead do *IF* Israel failed to keep the covenant on the other hand [Lev. 26:1ff, 14ff; Deut. 28:1ff, 15ff].)

And, because of continued disobedience, not keeping the covenant — which God, in His longsuffering, allowed to continue for centuries — God eventually uprooted His people from their land (a land unconditionally given to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob in the previous Abrahamic covenant), and drove them out among the nations *to effect repentance through Gentile persecution* (the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, about 722 and 605 B.C. respectively).

But, though a remnant was back in the land when Christ came the first time, national repentance was far from forthcoming. And this is the “why” of the call for *repentance* both during the offer of the kingdom seen in the gospels and the re-offer seen in Acts.

(The Greek word for “repent” is *metanoia*, or the verb form, *metanoeo*. These are compound words — *meta* prefixed to *noia* and *noeo*.

The primary meaning of *meta* is “with.” But prefixed to *noia* [meaning “mind,” equivalent to “nous” (transliterated from the Greek word *nous*)], or *noeo* [meaning “to think”], *meta* [in *metanoia*] — doing something “with” the mind — takes on the thought of “changing” one’s mind.

Thus, *metanoia* and *metanoeo* mean, “to change one’s mind, one’s thinking.” Other things [turning from sin, etc.] *are subsequent to and emanate from repentance*, or things such as “godly sorrow” *can effect repentance* [II Cor. 7:10; cf. Jonah 3:9, 10; Matt. 12:41].)

1) Baptism

To understand how *baptism*, preceded by *repentance*, fits into the matter, note the typology involved at the beginning of the account of Jesus’ response to Nicodemus in John 3:1ff.

The subject at hand in Christ’s dealings with Nicodemus had to do with *signs in relation to the message being proclaimed*,

which was the proffered kingdom, *NOT* eternal life (though eternal life [dealt with in relation to the kingdom first and foremost] is dealt with later in the discourse.

Christ's two opening statements to Nicodemus *could ONLY* have drawn from a large section of Israeli history, extending from the Red Sea passage in Exodus chapter fourteen to the entrance of the Israelites into the land in the Book of Joshua.

This is something which Nicodemus would have been quite familiar with, though he wasn't able to properly relate Christ's statements to this part of Israeli history.

And this would account for Christ's sharp rebuke later in the conversation, when this became quite apparent:

"Art thou a master in Israel [*lit.*, 'the teacher of Israel' (not just any teacher, but *a particular teacher*)], and knowest not these things?" (v. 10b).

In this respect, note Jesus' statement back in verse five, explaining that which He had opened with in verse three.

And an understanding of this will explain why the message of the kingdom to Israel was accompanied by baptism, or why Christians are to be baptized today.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit [Gk., 'Except a man be born (brought forth) out of water and Spirit'], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

(The construction of the Greek text of John 3:5 requires that both "water" and "Spirit" be understood *the SAME way* — either both in a literal sense or both in a figurative sense.

"Water" *CANNOT* be understood one way and "Spirit" another [this mistake is often made, erroneously translating, "water, even spirit"].)

Then, the type, beginning in Exodus chapter fourteen, opens John 3:3, 5 to one's understanding.

a) *Out of Water*

There is really *NO way that Nicodemus could have associated Christ's statements in John 3:3, 5 with the events back in Exodus chapter twelve* — the Passover (which would have related Christ's statement to that foreshadowed by events on day one in Gen. 1 [vv. 2b-5]).

The Passover, the first of seven Jewish festivals given to the Israelites under Moses (cf. Lev. 23:1ff), had to do with events which Nicodemus would have known that the nation had kept, which Israel had been observing year after year, over centuries of time. And, being among Israel's religious leaders, he *could ONLY* have been among those participating in these events.

The conversation between Christ and Nicodemus in John 3:1ff *could ONLY have been* a conversation between Christ and a person *who had ALREADY experienced the death of the firstborn, as seen in Ex. 12:1ff.*

And, beyond this, according to the things clearly seen and stated in both the text and context, the subject matter had to do with *the Jewish people and the kingdom (a people who could ONLY be viewed as already saved, having availed themselves of the blood of slain paschal lambs, with the firstborn having died vicariously).*

The opening part of this conversation *could NOT possibly have had anything to do with eternal salvation, which, of necessity, would have related to the events of Exodus chapter twelve.*

That to which Jesus referred *could ONLY be seen* in the type as having to do with events beyond the Passover in Ex. 12:1ff. It *could ONLY have been* understood as having to do with *a continued Divine work* beyond that foreshadowed by the events of day one in Genesis chapter one. It *could*

ONLY have been understood as having to do with that seen throughout days two through six — *a continued bringing forth from above, with a goal in view.*

In the original type in Gen. 1:1-2:3, *this GOAL is seen as a seventh day rest.*

In the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, *this GOAL is seen as realizing an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

And both types point to different facets of *EXACTLY the SAME thing occurring during EXACTLY the SAME time* — events during the 1,000-year Messianic Era, which will be the seventh millennium following six millennia of Divine restorative work.

Born out of water from John 3:5, in the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, *can ONLY* have to do with the symbolism seen in the Red Sea passage following the Passover (note corresponding events on day three in Gen. 1 [vv. 9-13]).

The Israelites (who had experienced the death of the firstborn) were then taken down into the Sea, symbolizing *burial following death* (taken down into the place of death) and raised up out of the Sea, symbolizing *resurrection* (raised up out of the place of death) and placed on the eastern banks of the Sea, removed from Egypt (Ex. 12-15).

They stood on the eastern banks of the Sea through *supernatural means, wherein resurrection power was exhibited.* And they stood in this position with a view to *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

The Israelites, passing through the Sea, had gone down into *the place of death. ONLY the dead are to be buried, and the death of the firstborn had just occurred.*

Thus, *a burial MUST also occur. BUT* beyond burial, with a vicarious death of the firstborn, *there MUST also be a resurrection.*

The Israelites, following the death of the firstborn, possessed spiritual life.

Thus, they *had to be raised* from the place of death to walk “in newness of life” — something having to do with *the spiritual man ALONE*, for this resurrection *has NOTHING* to do with the man of flesh. He is to be left in the place of death.

This is pictured during the present dispensation through the act of baptism. A person (a Christian) having experienced the death of the firstborn vicariously (through the blood of the Paschal Lamb Who died in his stead) is placed down in the waters. He then, within the symbolism involved, *finds himself in the place of death, beneath the waters*.

But, because the One providing the vicarious death conquered death, the Christian *can be removed from the waters and find himself in the position of having been raised with Christ* (Col. 2:12; 3:1ff).

And in this position — wrought through *supernatural, resurrection power* — the Christian is to walk “in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), *with a view to an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

It is going down into the place of death because of the death of the firstborn, and it is rising from this place, as Christ was raised, because the person possesses spiritual life. And this rising has to do with *the spiritual man ALONE*, for, again, *this resurrection has NOTHING* to do with the man of flesh. He is to be left in the place of death.

b) Out of Spirit

In John 3:5, Christ *NOT ONLY* referred to a birth (*a bringing forth*) out of water in the preceding respect, *BUT* He also referred to a birth (*a bringing forth*) out of Spirit as well.

Note the order: “Out of Water,” *THEN*, “Out of Spirit,” which would be *completely out of line* with *ANY thought that eternal salvation is the subject in these opening verses of John 3*.

(In eternal salvation, a work of the Spirit *MUST* precede an individual's passage through the waters, *MUST* precede his passage through the place of death, *NOT* follow, as in John 3:5. The Spirit *MUST FIRST* move [Gen. 1:2b], performing a regenerating work in the individual, a passage "from death unto life" [John 5:24].

Or, another way of stating the matter, in eternal salvation, the death of the firstborn *MUST* precede that foreshadowed by the Red Sea passage [Ex. 12-14].)

In the type, this bringing forth out of Spirit is seen through the Israelites, on the eastern banks of the Sea — beyond their passage through the waters of the sea, typifying baptism — being led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, as they moved toward *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

And the antitype is evident. A Christian, *raised from the waters* to walk "in newness of life," has the indwelling Spirit to lead him into all truth, *as he moves toward an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

There MUST be a resurrection in view. Then, the one raised from the place of death *MUST follow the man of spirit, allowing the Spirit to fill and lead him throughout his pilgrim journey* (cf. Eph. 5:18, 19; Col. 3:16).

And the entire matter rests upon that initially seen and set forth in an unchangeable fashion in Gen. 1:2b-25 — the ruined creation removed from its watery grave and completely restored over six days time by means of a work of the Spirit throughout.

There MUST be an initial bringing forth from above (a passing "from death unto life" [Gen. 1:2b-5; cf. John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5]); *THEN, there MUST be a continued bringing forth from above* (Gen. 1:6-25).

And John 3:3-5 deals with the *TWO* aspects of the latter (out of water and Spirit), *NOT* with the *ONE* aspect of the

former (the death of the firstborn back in Egypt), which is *EXACTLY* what is seen in the message to Israel throughout the gospels and Acts.

Concluding Thoughts:

Any way that the matter of John 3:3-5 is viewed, *SOLELY* from a Scriptural standpoint, *ONLY saved individuals can possibly be in view, many notwithstanding.*

The passage takes one back 1,500 years, from John's day to Moses' day. And, referencing Moses' day, the passage has to do with events *following* the death of the firstborn in Ex. 12, *NOT* to events beginning with the death of the firstborn.

And, whether Jews at the time of and for a number of years following Christ's first coming (with the proffered kingdom in view) or *the one new man* "in Christ" since that time (with the *SAME* proffered kingdom in view), *ONLY saved individuals can possibly be in view.*

It was saved Jews being offered the kingdom throughout time covered by the gospels and Acts, and it was/is Christians being offered the kingdom throughout time covered by the latter part of Acts and the epistles, extending into the present day and time.