



Chosen: to Finish the Task

144,000 Study



Lesson Four:



“Prepare the way
of the Lord!”



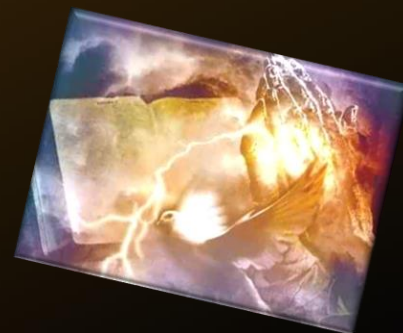


The Midnight Criers



Jesus taught that:

“The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” (Luke 10:9)



By that He announced that God's kingdom had been SPIRITUALLY inaugurated! Later, in a forward-looking message, He noted:

“When these things begin to come to pass, [end-time signs], lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.... know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (Luke 21:28, 31)

That verse announces when the kingdom of God is about to be PHYSICALLY consummated!

Jesus re-emphasized that kingdom message:

“KNOW THIS: The kingdom of God has come” (Luke 10:11)



Then He commissioned the disciples to preach that mankind can even be part of that kingdom – right now!

“Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

(Luke 17:21) – SPIRITUAL

Then, in anticipation of the PHYSICAL kingdom, Christ said: *“I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”*

(Luke 22:16)

Why are these issues or thoughts important?

Between the *spiritual inauguration* and the *physical consummation*, there are kingdom messengers! Those disciples were a “small group” that aided in its beginnings. At earth’s “final generation” the 144,000 generation becomes the “small group.”

Jesus frequently illustrated those “kingdom” teachings by saying: “*The kingdom of God [or heaven] is like ...*”

One such time was in the story
of the Ten Virgins.

Jesus said:

*“Then shall the
kingdom of heaven
be likened unto ten
virgins, which took their lamps, and
went forth to meet the bridegroom.”*

(Matt. 25:1)





Those virgins represent the church waiting for Christ's physical coming. They all had lighted lamps, filled with the Spirit. With excitement they “went out” to meet groom Jesus. But an unexpected “tarrying time” led to weariness and sleep. They did not continue to “watch.”

This was/is where **faith is tried** – when there is an apparent “delay” beyond expectations (*herein came waiting without watching*).

(COR 4:10)

The spiritual question: *Is that original excitement still latent? Can it be revived?*

At midnight (spiritually the darkest hour of earth's history) a cry was heralded that the Bridegroom was PHYSICALLY coming. All of the virgins awoke.



That's what they all had been waiting for! That is what their hopes were focused on. They all wanted to join His entourage in going to the "physical kingdom." But some had not experienced deeply the SPIRITUAL kingdom – a prerequisite.



We turn from those ten virgins, though they are a pivotal teaching venue, and question: *Who woke them up from that slumber?* Whoever it was represented a different person or group!

Jesus said there was a cry, “*Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.*” (Matt. 25:6) **AND** – we are told:

“At the loud cry ... thousands will awake from the stupor that has held the world for ages, and will see the beauty and value of the truth.” (RH, December 15, 1885)



When does that “cry” go out?

- It occurs **when** watchers see “signs” that the bridegroom is about to arrive.
- It comes at the “end” of a “wait” or “tarrying time.”
- It comes at the **onset** of earth’s last 3½ years, called the “**appointed time**” (Hab. 2:2-3; Daniel 8:19, 11:31-35; cf. Rev. 11:2-3)

It will come from those who are prepared to “cry aloud,” sparing nothing to bring the “Church” and the “world” to repentance. (Isa. 58:1)



“We have no time to dwell on matters that are of no importance. Our time should be given to proclaiming the last message of mercy to a guilty world. Men are needed who move under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, men who will obey the words, ‘*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*’” (Isa. 58:1; 10MR 221) (world and church)

It is when they “cry” – “*lift up your heads ... your redemption draweth nigh.*” (Luke 21:28)

Noah, in his day, “cried”
a desolating message
tied to a very specific time
prophecy! A way of escape
was detailed.



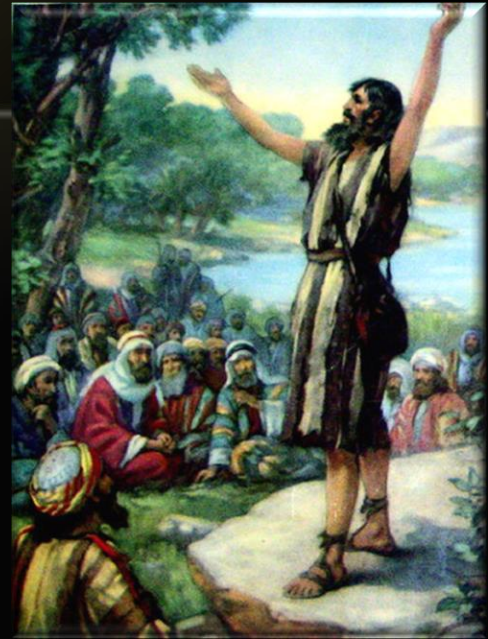
At the end of time, it will be
exactly the same. The message
will be for the last generation
that a specific “hour” has come!
A wonderful “way of escape” will
be revealed!

The 144,000 will be those last-day “light bearers!” Many call that final appeal the “Elijah Message.”

Through Malachi, God even said: *“Behold, I will send you **Elijah the prophet** before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”* (Mal. 4:5)

“Elijah” would have a “heart turning,” preparatory message! If rejected, God warned that He would “smite” (destroy) the earth – the wicked.

Elijah had left planet earth
800 years before these words
were spoken. Was he going
to return to warn earth's
inhabitants once again?



That “mystery prophecy” was to meet its
“first fulfillment” through John the Baptist.

Gabriel told priest Zacharias, while ministering in the Holy Place of the temple, that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a miracle son named “John.” (Luke 1:13)

Then he said:

“And he shall go before him [speaking of Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elias, [Elijah] to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:17)

Jesus later confirmed that John was that Elijah fulfillment:

“Elias [Elijah] has come already, and they knew him not.” (Matt. 17:12)

“Among those that are born of women,” Jesus said, “there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28)





Both John and Elijah had messages of judicial warning, preparation and hope for a unique hour in redemptive history!

Elijah's ominous charge to warn Israel and John's preparatory mission for the first advent of the Messiah are superb models for us! The 144,000 must have/will have a distinct and relevant message to ready planet earth for its climax.

“Just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” Those individuals will be special “instruments He has chosen.” (4BC 1184)

The 144,000 represent that special small group that He first brings on the scene as His instruments of end-time grace to warn the “whole world.”



In the “power of”



What will be the “mission” of the 144,000?

“The prophecy that John’s mission fulfilled outlines our work, – ‘*Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.*’ (Matthew 3:2, 3)

As John prepared the way for the first advent, so we are to prepare the way for the second advent of the Saviour.” (CW 178)

It is a mission that gives the “last message of warning” to encircle the whole world.

(*The Southern Watchman*, March 21, 1905)



The 144,000 have a special task to prepare for that final work, as did Elijah and John the Baptist.
(FLB 290)



“He [John] studied the revelations of God in nature. Under the guiding of the divine Spirit, he studied the scrolls of the prophets. By day and by night, Christ was his study, his meditation, until mind and heart and soul were filled with the glorious vision. He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was lost



sight of. He beheld the majesty of holiness,
and knew himself to be inefficient and
unworthy. It was God's message that
he was to declare. It was in God's power
and His righteousness that he was to stand.
He was ready to go forth as Heaven's
messenger, unawed by the human, because
he had looked upon the Divine." (CC 272)



“In order to give such a message as John
gave, we must have a spiritual experience
like his.” (8T 332-333)



A wonderful picture of Elijah's relationship experience with God is given by expositor White:

On Mount Carmel, "Elijah calls upon them to humble their hearts and turn to the God of their fathers, that the curse [drought] upon the land of Israel may be removed. Then, bowing reverently before the unseen God ... he offers a simple prayer ... as if he knows Jehovah is there, a witness to the scene, a listener to his appeal." (PK 152)

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, came in the “*spirit and power of Elijah.*” Zacharias, his father, was told by Gabriel that he would “*be filled with the Holy Spirit.*” (Luke 1:17, 15). To those carrying a similar preparatory message:

“In the time of the end, when God’s work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor.” (AA 54-55)

“The work of John the Baptist, and the work of those who in the last days go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to arouse the people from their apathy, are in many respects the same. His work is a type of the work that must be done in this age. Christ is to come the second time to judge the world in righteousness. The messengers of God who bear the last message of warning to be given to the world, are to prepare the way for Christ’s second advent, as John prepared the way for his first advent.” (*The Southern Watchman*, March 21, 1905)

Though millions claim they are “God’s people,” a judicial decision will soon eternally seal all of mankind. The “Elijah message” will sensitize every person as to whether they are in a safe “covenant relationship” with God.

One of Elijah’s stern messages was given to Ahab. The end of the 3½ years of drought was in sight. Elijah encountered this wicked king of the ten northern tribes. Caught by surprise, Ahab sneered:

“Is that you. O troubler of Israel?” The great prophet responded: “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed other gods.” (I Kings 18:17-18)



Soon came this final appeal to apostate Israel:
*“How long will you falter between two opinions?
If the Lord is God follow Him; but if Baal, follow
him.”* (vs 21) It was and will be final-decision time
– with no middle road wavering!

John the Baptist preached with boldness:

“The words of the preacher in the wilderness were with power. He bore his message unflinchingly, rebuking the sins of priests and rulers, and enjoining upon them the works of the kingdom of heaven. He pointed out to them their sinful disregard of their Father’s authority in refusing to do the work appointed them. He made no compromise with sin, and many were turned from their unrighteousness.” (COL 278)

“Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was, ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’” (Luke 13:5) (Ev. 179)



“As John the Baptist ... called their attention to the Ten Commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: ‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.’” (Mar. 22)

“Our message is not to be one of peace and safety. As a people who believe in Christ’s soon appearing, we have a definite message to bear.” (4BC 1184)

“In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon His messengers to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elias.”

(FLB 2905)





“By startling messages of warning, God’s prophet awakened men from worldly dreaming. Through him God called backsliding Israel to repentance. By his presentation of truth he exposed popular delusions. In contrast with the false theories of his time, truth in his teaching stood forth as an eternal certainty.... This same message ... is to be given to the world today.” (CE 178)

John's message was new and startling and could not be interwoven with the superstitions and the tradition of his day. His work "was to expose the character of the works of the Pharisees, to set their traditions and heresies in the true light before the people." (RH, April 3, 1894)



"Our message is to be as direct as ... [John's]. He rebuked kings for their iniquity." Though his "life was imperiled ... our work in this age must be done as faithfully." (UL 308)

“The word of God is to be presented with clearness and power, that those who have ears to hear may hear the truth. Thus the gospel of present truth will be placed in the way of those who know it not, and it will be accepted by not a few, and carried by them to their own homes in all parts of the world.” (9T 122)



Heaven's Protective Sealing



The responsibilities of the 144,000 will be the most weighty of any group in history. They will help “drive” the “grand finale” of God’s redemptive plan!

Beyond that time of great honor and stress, their eternal hope is beautifully described.



Jesus has been providing special help for His *last-generation* people ever since He “came down” in Revelation 10! Then in the 144,000 introductory message He “arises from the east” with an urgent shout:

“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Rev. 7:3)



This is an imperative which provides full spiritual protection to the 144,000. God will not allow the winds of war and political strife to impact those individuals till they are eternally secure!

Not only is their spiritual maturity in focus, but they have been set aside as God's last workers.
(cf. 11:5-6)

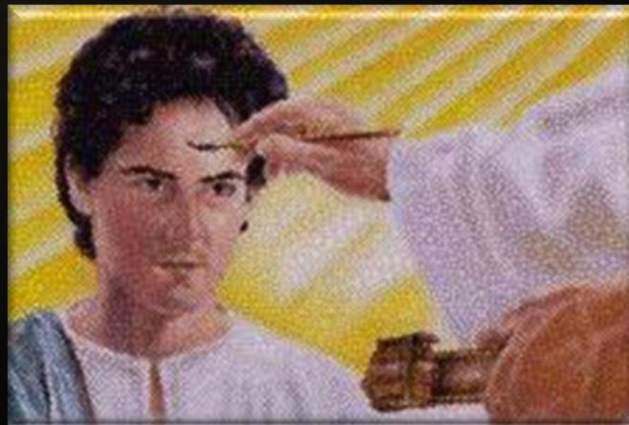
This imagery draws from Revelation 10:5, where His feet are on “land and sea,” revealing His worldwide protection. Those destructive winds are contained until heaven’s objectives are completed!



The “trees” represent wicked leaders:
“The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan.” (Isa. 2:12-13 NIV; cf Zech. 11:1-2 NIV)

The destructive work of the wicked will be held in check till a special anointing is completed on those who will be translated when Jesus comes!

This is called the “sealing work.”



“The sealing is a pledge from God of perfect security to His chosen ones (Exodus 31:13-17). Sealing indicates you are God’s chosen. He has appropriated you to Himself. As the sealed of God we are Christ’s purchased possession, and no one shall pluck us out of His hands. The seal given in the forehead is God, New Jerusalem. ‘I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God’ (Rev. 3:12)” [presented under the Philadelphia Church]. (15MR 225)

This **body of believers** represents the members of the triumphant Christian church, present when Jesus comes! They will be the “**living saints**” who are **translated**, and who know that they will be saved at that momentous night of deliverance.

(RH, July 21, 1851)

This body, when seen by John, was too large to number. (Rev. 7:9, 14) This is another reason we know that the number “144,000” is symbolic.

It is at that night that the “everlasting covenant” is delivered to this body of saints, symbolic of their marriage to Jesus!

This end-time group will be characterized as standing for everything that heaven honors.

“The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily



beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet's illustration of the last work under the figure of the men each having a slaughter weapon in his hand. One man



among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. *'And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.'*"

(3T 266)

Ellen G. White



**“Strive to be among
the 144,000”**



John was given two visions of the 144,000.
In both, He “observed” them in heaven.



“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes... And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

(Rev 7:9-10)

Then, through a **designed response**, God drew a stunning contrast between the “sea beast” with his taunting followers (Rev. 13) to that 144,000 (Rev. 14:1-5). God often unfolds contrasts in John’s apocalyptic book.



“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” (Rev. 14:1)

One cannot help but reflect on Paul's words:

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.”

(Heb. 12:22)



John is so excited that he says “*and lo!*” “Look! I want you to see what I see!”

The Lamb of God was before the Father’s throne receiving a scroll. (Rev. 5)

That was in anticipation of the conflict with sin, soon to end. Then we fast-forward in time and see that point in time when the saints (the 144,000) and Lamb Jesus stand at the divine center of the universe on Mount Zion.



“And his servants [of God and the Lamb] shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

(Rev. 22:3b-4)

“Unless the name of God is written in your forehead, – written there because God is the center of your thoughts, – you will not be meet for the inheritance in light. It is your Creator who has poured out to you all heaven in one wondrous gift, – His only-begotten Son.” (CS 46)

The wicked, with the “mark of the beast” on their foreheads (Rev. 13), are contrasted with these redeemed individuals who have the “mark of God” on their foreheads. (Rev. 14:1b)
The saints are “sealed.”

Those marks “seal” where eternity will be spent!



Then John describes a melodious sound:

“And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:



“And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” (Rev. 14:2-3)



The melodious sound from the courts of heaven is described as “penetrating.” John uses three similes to describe what he hears:

(1) “the sound of many waters” depicts the vast numbers who are singing, (2) a peal of thunder portrays the judicial certainty of the saints victory and (3) the harpists instill an elevated sense of the rapturous home they have now entered!

All this imagery focuses on the 144,000!

“There is a day just about to burst upon us when God’s mysteries will be seen, and all His ways vindicated; when justice, mercy, and love will be the attributes of His throne. When the earthly warfare is accomplished, and the saints are all gathered home, our first theme will be the song of Moses, the servant of God. The second theme will be the song of the Lamb, the song of grace and redemption. This song will be louder, loftier, and in sublimer strains, echoing and re-echoing



through the heavenly courts.... The church history upon the earth and the church redeemed in heaven all center around the cross of Calvary. This is the theme, this is the song,—Christ all and in all,—in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is a new song, for it was never before sung in heaven.” (TM 433)

John describes further that special group:

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:4)



This imagery becomes a **model** for God's people and a **warning** to the careless!

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.” This reveals their refusal to compromise God’s standards, to present themselves to Christ with unadulterated loyalty. Amazing! That means:

They now are able to *“follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”*



With assuring words John writes:

“These were redeemed from among men.”

Yes! The 144,000 are redeemed human beings! We can be among that group!

It is now fascinating how John concludes this verse: “*being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*” (Rev. 14:4) The “first” of any “increase” was dedicated to God.

Paul describes Christ as the “firstfruits of those who have died” (I Cor. 15:20; cf Rom. 8:23)

The 144,000 are the “firstfruits” of the redeemed who are sealed and translated.

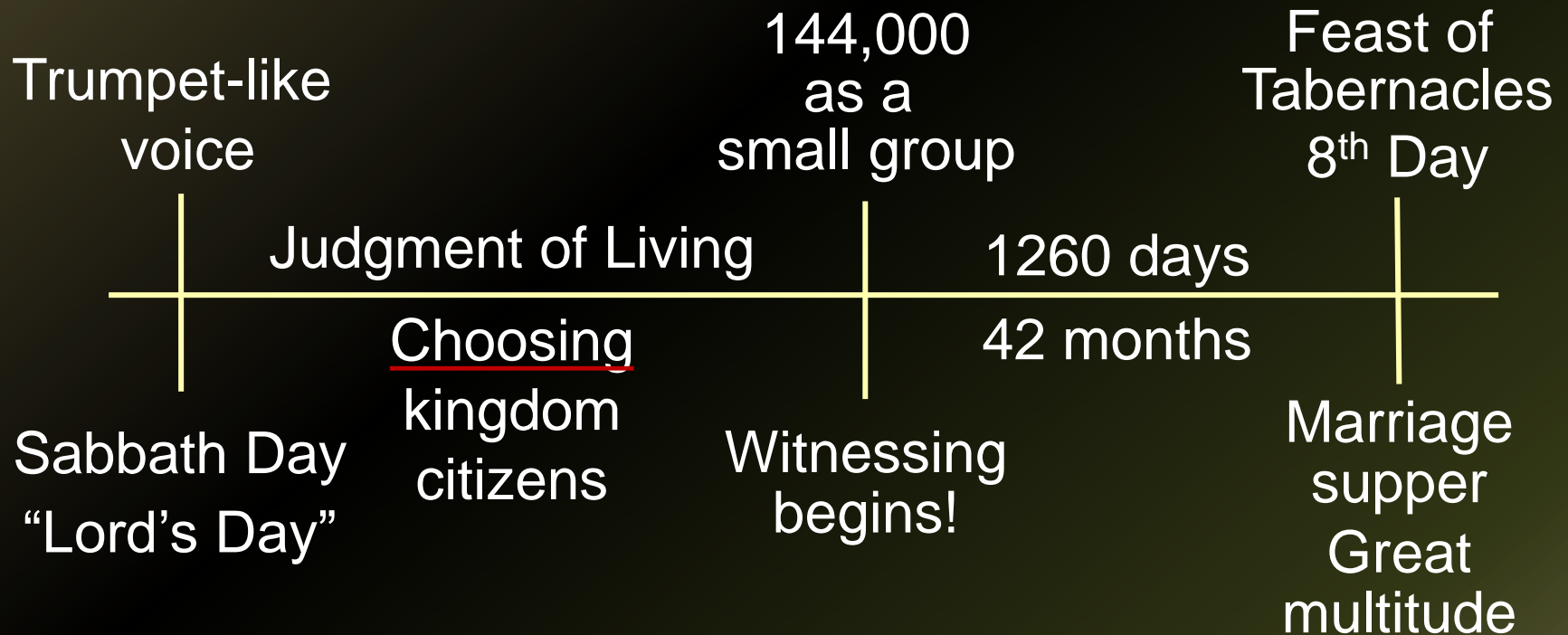


“And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

(Rev. 14:5) These saints have obtained a wonderful level of moral fitness.

“There should be a continual aim to imitate the society we expect soon to associate with—angels of God who have never fallen by sin. Our characters should be holy, our manners comely, our words without guile, and we should go on step by step until we are all fitted for translation.” (5MR 293, 1861)

John has a culminating vision of these saints.
The apocalyptic story started with a judicial
era at the Feast of Trumpets. It ends four
years later on the 8th day of the Feast of
Tabernacles – the marriage supper of the
Lamb!



Just before that marriage supper of the Lamb is “praise time” such as the universe has never seen before! In stirring language John tries to describe this celestial moment:

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

(Rev. 15:2)



John first “sees,” then he “hears” parts of those two songs.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:”



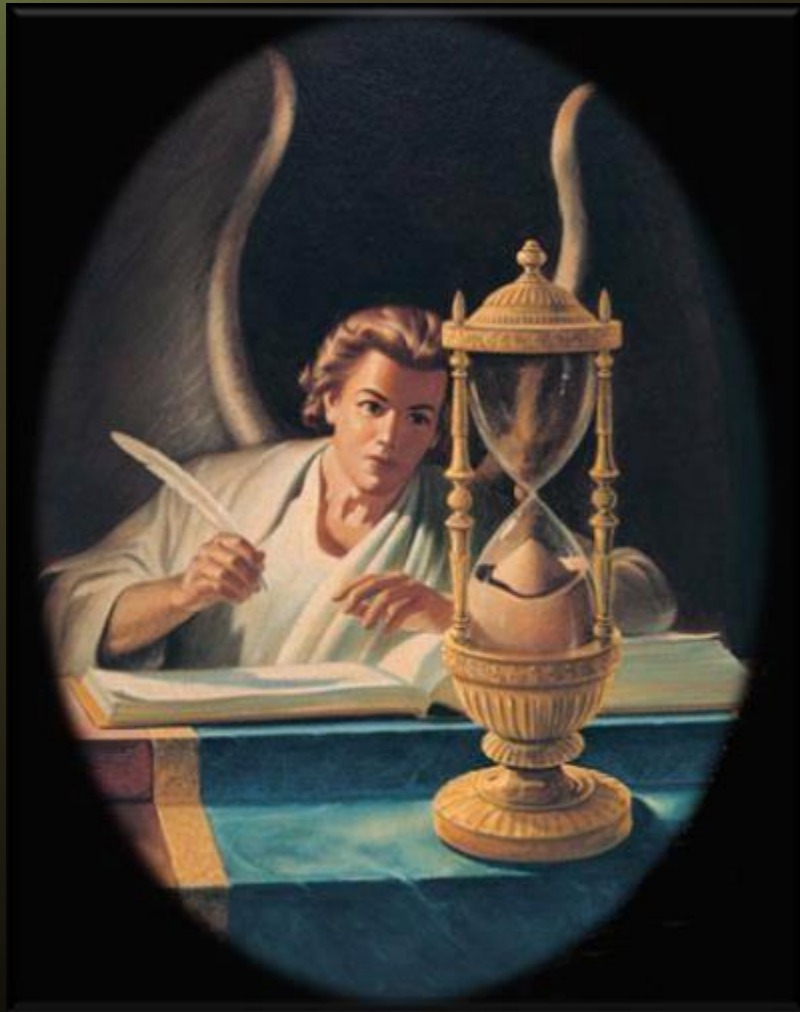
Praise:

“Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty.”

“Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

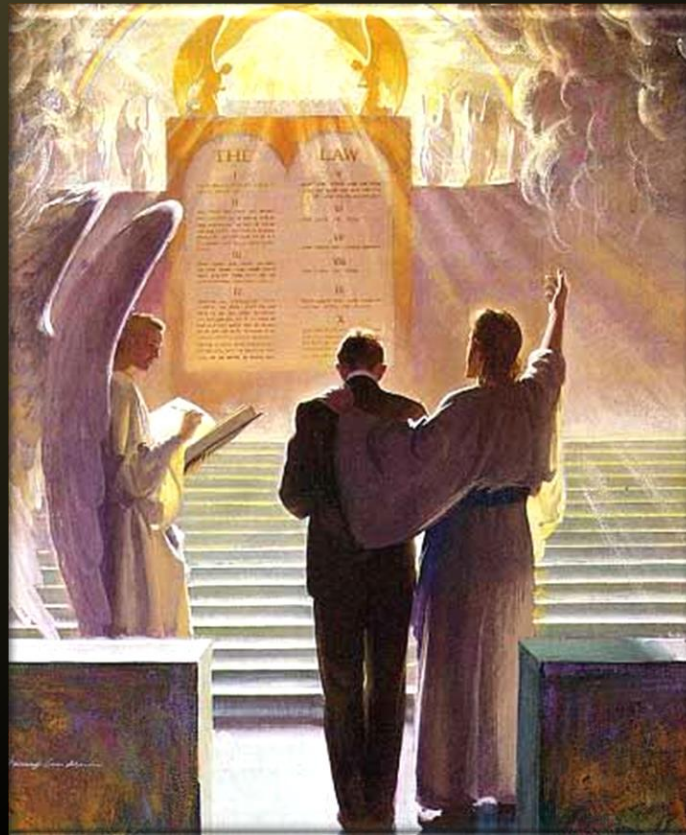
Refrain:

“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”



God's judgments will be based on very personal records that are being carefully written in heaven.

Those records will soon be closed. Then nothing can be changed.



The question: “How will you stand?”
Will you be part of that “praise” choir?

The End



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