

The HOPE of the Last Great Day

A MAJOR Component in the Plan of God is illustrated in a Separate Holyday, the Seventh, Yet One which Remains 'Well Off the Radar Screen' when it comes to being Understood by the 'Accepted' Religious Community!

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Much is understood about that prophetic period known as the “Last Days” in Bible Prophecy. But that period in human history known as the “Last Great Day” is another matter altogether. It has, in fact, nothing to do with that specific area of Pre-Millennial prophecy dealing with these Last Days, which generally include historical events having to do with and leading up to the impending return of Jesus Christ to Earth in Great Power and Glory.

Few places in the Bible talk about this major era, and few people have any awareness of its existence or the vital place it plays in revealing to us the **ultimate hope** for that less fortunate segment of humanity who were never afforded opportunity to become ‘saved’ in their all too brief lifetimes. We can all identify peoples and times who we know never had an adequate opportunity to repent and become ‘converted’. Those who die in infancy, for example, or the millions who lived in remote lands without ever having been evangelized, or who lived back in that era before Christ’s ministry and sacrifice for sin. When did these ever have an opportunity to know, let alone to respond, in their lifetimes? It’s interesting to notice that two major religious organizations sought an answer to this question. The Mormons with their genealogical interests and the Catholics with their Limbo¹ and Purgatory Doctrines, each pose an answer in their own distinct way to this enigmatic question.

The Last Days involve a series of troubling events, but the Last Great Day, on the other hand, occupies the opposite extreme, illustrating a time of great hope for the greater majority who ever drew breath on the Earth. It **should** occupy a prominent place

in Christian theology, yet few in this age have any awareness of this Day or what it reveals. Be it ever so humble, there just is no place in our typical theological process for this final era and what it offers to the vast sea of ‘discarded’ humanity.

What’s It All About?

In Leviticus Chapter 23, we are introduced to a list of Seven Annual Holydays, which God revealed to Israel through Moses. These Annual Holy Days are at best minimized in religion, being explained as having to do with Israel’s history or perhaps their primitive harvest rituals. Any sense of their true meaning is lost to most by this means, as it obscures their prophetic relevance. Of all of the revealed Holydays, it was this seventh one that proved most veiled in its earliest presentation.

In Leviticus 23, we are given only the most cursory mention, not even allowing us a name. In fact, if we didn’t count, we might not even have noticed it. We are given the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles, but then we see that there’s an ‘**eighth day**’ after it in Leviticus 23:36. No name, not one of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, just this ‘eighth day’! All we know from this is that there’s one last Holyday set immediately after the end of the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles.

In the reiteration of the Holydays in Deuteronomy, (a name which means the second giving of the law) chapter 16, this un-named day isn’t even directly mentioned. The only clue, and one admittedly obscure, is a specific reference to judgment and justice, placed at that point in the narrative where we’d expect to find this ‘eighth day’ discussed.

Thank God for John!

If it weren’t for the Apostle John, we might not even have a biblical name for this obscure day!

¹ Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary: on: **Limbo**: “In Catholic Theology, a place for those who have not received the grace of Christ while living, and yet have not deserved the punishments of willful and impenitent sinners.”

In chapter 7, referring to the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, he writes in verse 37: ***“On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink’,”*** This refers to being allowed open access to God’s Spirit, which was to come. So, not only are we given a name for this day, but also an early glimpse into its ultimate meaning. From this, we now know this eighth day as the **Last Great Day**. We see also that it will involve unrestricted access to God’s Spirit.

It continues: ***“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, ² out of his heart ³ will flow rivers of living water.” ⁴*** The narrative continues with Jesus later on, within the same day, pointedly discussing the matter of **judgment** and **justice**. We are again, in the gospel of John, brought to the same general subject reference as in Deuteronomy 16. What does this Last Great Day have to do with justice and judgment?

So, immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles, there is an eighth day. This day, if we understand Jesus’ proclamation correctly, offers open access to God’s Holy Spirit, and has much to do with the matter of just judgment.

Revelation Completes the Scene!

We understand the millennial reign of Christ and His Saints on Earth as being the true prophetic fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. Its seven days illustrating the seventh millennium, the Kingdom of God, established after six thousand years of man’s mis-rule on Earth.⁵ Here, God’s Spirit-Born Saints rule Earth with Christ for a thousand years, where those who survived through the times of ‘extreme trouble’ become the progenitors of a new generation, living in peace and prosperity, like mankind has only dreamt of. Where the ‘rest of the dead’ continue to await their resurrection, as it’s stated so clearly in Revelation 20:5. These ‘rest of the dead’ have no hope in the millennial age. It’s

² Proverbs 18:4 ...wisdom is a flowing brook...

³ It says ‘belly’ in the KJV. (Anciently, the seat of emotion.)

⁴ Revelation 22:1 Personally reflecting God’s Throne.

⁵ The weekly Sabbath alludes to the seventh millennium. It’s interesting that many opt to worship on the ‘eighth day’ the day after the Sabbath. Could it identify their true opportunity as also being within this extended time-frame?

over before they are raised-up. They are raised-up into a time called, “the Great White Throne Judgment”! Do our eminent scholars have any concept as to what this day involves? This is **after** the thousand years. What happens then, and within how long a time period?

For lack of better definition, most assume this Last Great Day, this Last Day of ‘Judgment’, involves their resurrection only to a **sentencing**. Because the Christian world hasn’t been correctly oriented to the fact of, and the purpose of, the various resurrections from the dead, as Scripture reveals them, this ‘Day’, this Era, is outside their theological envelope. How many religious leaders can explain exactly why there is one thousand years between the ‘**first** resurrection’ and the **next**? To most, a ‘second resurrection’ would have no place and no real purpose. Some theologies even render any and all resurrections from the dead as irrelevant. But to the Plan of God, both the first and the second have a most profound purpose, because you see, God has a Plan to, in all fairness, provide opportunity for ‘judgment and justice’ to those who died, never having had **any** opportunity. How could someone who died as a child, ever have been afforded a fair judgment? How could they ever be regarded as having received justice? Yet, they, and others with them, will! This area of understanding is relatively rare and unique in the world of religion.

It Isn’t Their Fault!

Think about it. There are millions who died, who, by no fault of their own, were not afforded reasonable opportunity to meet even the minimum criteria for ‘salvation’. Just considering those who died in infancy, it’d be millions. It wasn’t their fault. They had no conscious decision to make in their brief existences. Yet, many religious creeds regard all these to be hopelessly **lost** forever. The entire segment of humanity, who lived and died on earth prior to Christ’s Sacrifice, lived and died completely ignorant of the fact that such opportunity was ever to be available. It wasn’t their fault that they were born when they were born. But, then again, what hope did they have?

The Mormons at least recognized the question, and pose a solution. Thus their interest in genealogies. They pose an answer to this ‘problem’, taking

actions on behalf of the dead. Catholics as well, in recognition of the need, offer a belief structure that provides an ‘answer’ to this very unsettling dilemma, as they conceive it: Thus their ‘limbo infantium’, for example, where, like with the Mormons, loved ones on this side of the grave can intervene positively on their behalf. So, the problem is recognized. What is lacking in many theologies, (with some not having even put any effort at all toward providing an answer), is solid Biblical evidence of the true status of those who died without any awareness or any real opportunity to have become converted and to pursue life in the eternal family of God. The bleakest of all theologies are those who pre-consign all of these to an ever-burning hell. Calvinistic teachings come to mind for this. But if you investigate, even the most magnanimous evangelical expressions, if you probe, you’ll find that they too can offer no explanation, nor offer any possibility that these ‘unfortunates’ ever have any further hope once they die!

Such is the state among those who embrace the unsubstantial theological position of each receiving his eternal reward immediately upon death, who reject the substantial Biblical doctrine of the resurrections from the dead. They don’t understand the resurrections, and thus, can’t understand what they need to understand, in order to be able to answer this enormously important question. **What about the rest of the dead?** And, if they have already received their eternal reward, why would the dead even **need** to live again? As this area of thought kicks the legs out from under much of the theological establishment of our time, it just isn’t seriously pursued.

It is central to God’s Redemptive Plan that every one in the Grave, will at some point in time, **“hear His voice, and come forth...”** Christ affirmed as much Himself.⁶ Yet, this is not central to every denomination of the Christian faith!

Martha understood that “the Last Day” involved a resurrection. (John 11:24) To her, this expressed a hope. Few today hold expectation of the Last Day as involving hope, only a dread of impending sentence. Notice, Christ didn’t correct her in this regard. Though it is unlikely she understood the

‘first resurrection’ as it later became revealed. She reflected what was commonly understood,⁷ that there was to be a resurrection in which all would be raised, and separated. The same general situation that Christ elaborated on in his ‘**sheep from the goats**’ narrative, found in Matthew 25:31 – 46. It was only later in Church history that believers began to be specifically aware of there being more than one distinct resurrection. Christ alluded to multiple resurrections in John 5: 24 – 30, but at that time, it wasn’t clear. The comparable passage in Revelation 20:5-6 & 11-15, when overlaid with John 5: makes clear and unmistakable distinction.

The “First Resurrection”⁸ involving God’s True Saints **only**, occurs just prior to the 1000 Years. There is no other resurrection until after the 1000 Years are finished! That clearly places any and all remaining resurrections into this period of time we know as “The Last Great Day”: that period immediately following the Millennial Age. So, we know from this, that any and all remaining resurrections fall within this last period of human existence. After seeing that even death and the grave, as institutions, are abolished from existence at the conclusion of the “Great White Throne Judgment”, (Re.20:14) no further resurrection could be possible.

This leads us to an inescapable conclusion: That all resurrections from the dead occur **within** it, except only that limited one which occurs at Christ’s Return, at the “Last Trump”. (1st Cor. 15:52)

What’s Great About It?

If this Great White Throne Judgment involves only a ‘final sentencing’, we’d have to ask, What’s so great about it? Here, as many understand it, God is going to consign the overwhelming majority of humanity who have ever lived to the “Lake of Fire”, so, if that’s all that this ‘Day’ involves, then God would be asking us to celebrate His overwhelming failure!! That being, His failure to gather (save) from among His Creation more than just the most infinitesimal percentage of those who ever lived. Do the math! It’s fewer than one in a hundred thousand of all who ever lived! Maybe

⁶ John 5:28-29, Matthew 25:31-32

⁷ Though those of the Sadduceean persuasion would have disagreed! Matt. 22:23

⁸ Rev. 20:5 “*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the First Resurrection*”

not even that good! His Ultimate Plan, that “none should perish” would have to be regarded an abject failure! Why would He have us celebrate as a “Great Day” an apparent failure? The point here being, that, NO, there is something in this Day, and what it means IS, in fact, extraordinary. Using this logical approach, we can begin to see that we ought to investigate further.

Did God Mis-Calculate?

Did God make a mistake? Was He mistaken as to how many would ultimately respond to His Plan of Salvation? Was He intending there be more? Did He have any idea 40 centuries ago, how few would repent and become converted? After all, the total numbers are under-whelming when compared to the uncountable billions who have lived and died throughout history.

Actually, the answer is contained within the Day itself. God is not disappointed or embarrassed by the few who have responded. The very fact of the Day’s existence, and its time-placement, suggests that there is a final phase, not apparent in typical religions. No, God didn’t mis-anticipate. He chose to emphasize through this final day a fact revealed from the earliest times! A fact that there is a later day of salvation, greater than the first one. That there are **two** harvests of souls, an “early rain and a latter rain”!⁹ This is the general picture we see in Creation, and given in ancient times, upon which the Holyday Seasons, as later revealed, were built. “*A shadow of things to come*”,¹⁰ as they’re called, or ‘an outline of future events’.

God’s Plan involved choosing a specific few in the first calling, thus the earlier harvest: Pentecost / Trumpets, and a greater harvest to follow: Tabernacles / Last Great Day. The purpose of the Last Great Day was revealed gradually: Veiled at first, only becoming understood in the contexts of the Book of Revelation in the late first century!

From this, we can understand that God isn’t through with His Creation. It wasn’t His intent that the overwhelming majority respond right at first. He is building His Eternal family deliberately and thoughtfully. The ‘firstfruits’ first, of which Christ

is the first firstfruit. The firstfruits will be harvested at His Second Coming. Those called in the first harvest period are specifically limited to those who He calls. “***No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*** (John 6:44 KJV) Who can respond is limited! This is an area the religious world can’t understand, largely because it doesn’t understand God’s overall Plan. It doesn’t understand God’s Plan because it doesn’t understand the resurrections, nor does it understand their setting and purpose as revealed in the Holydays. Rejection of Biblical teachings and illustrations has its price!

But, if this were true, then wouldn’t that leave the majority without choice or opportunity? Come to think of it, didn’t we come to the conclusion earlier that the majority haven’t responded? Is it because they were never really called? (see also John 5:21)

Again, a clue is contained in the phraseology. For there to be a ‘**firstfruits**’ harvest, there must be a subsequent harvest. If in the first harvest there is limited opportunity, wouldn’t it be logical that in a subsequent harvest there would be an open call? In other words, is there a time when the individual can decide to respond or not at his own discretion? But, most people would have already died by the time this would be possible.

If we go back again to the Feast-time narrative in John 7: and understanding that what was said, was said in the context of the Last Great Day, we can see something else in the message. Verse 37 says, “***In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.***” This refers to that period of time, and that circumstance, where responding is up to the individual. The Temple is open.¹¹ The setting of the passage in Revelation 22: is reminiscent of the John 7: statement: “***And the Spirit and the bride say Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.***” The very same theme as the Last Great Day message of John 7. The opportunity to

⁹ Deut.11:14 & 32:2, Hos.6:3, Joel 2:23, James 5:7, etc.

¹⁰ Colossians 2:16-17

¹¹ A key development seen in Rev. 11:19, where the Temple is opened (for business (redemption)) and the Ark of God’s Covenant seen. This is in that time-setting just after the Saints are raised, and Christ takes full Power over the nations.

receive of God's Holy Spirit is to be then opened to any and all who choose to avail themselves. There is a day in which the opportunity for at-will salvation will be fully open to all. (And without Satan's influence.) This, of course begins in the Millennial Era, but that doesn't allow for those long deceased who remain dead until after the thousand years are finished. It's the massive numbers in their graves, who died prior to any period of real opportunity for them that we need to focus on. This has been an enigma thru all time. The answer is revealed in this Day. The second greater harvest provides for including them too!

Re-opening the Book of Life

When the Last Trumpet sounds, and the dead in Christ are raised, all those whose names are in it will be raised to immortal life. From that moment, the Book of Life will have no names in it of those awaiting Life! Yet in Revelation 20:15, clearly referring to the concluding events of this Great White Throne Judgment, we see the Book of Life **opened** to see whose names are written in it. We need to consider whose names would be in it. If the book was 'emptied' of names, back at the first resurrection, and if no others were to ever be added, what would be the point of referring to the Book of Life again here to see whose names are in it? The obvious conclusion is, that many additional names were added AFTER the first resurrection!

At the final resurrection, we see the 'sheep being separated from the goats'. (Matt.25) The question is, where do these 'sheep' come from? Were there by-passed Saints left out of the first resurrection, or were more added to the Book of Life AFTER it?

Here again, we are presented with a situation that attests to the fact of yet another day of salvation, in which new names are added to the Book of Life.

It begins with those who survive through the Great Tribulation, and their descendents, in the thousand years. But that doesn't provide for those who died throughout history. There is no resurrection for them prior to the end of the thousand years. They remain in their graves through the Millennial Age.

The Second Resurrection

After the thousand years are finished, the rest of

the dead are to be raised. (Rev. 20:5) What we need to establish is, What for?

Now, this is the area where many people have problems. There's a segment of Christianity that has no real use for any resurrection to life. Their conviction is that each person's eternal reward is assigned immediately at death. Those more knowledgeable understand that there **is** to be a resurrection, but are at a loss to explain exactly why. Fewer still understand that there are multiple resurrections. Christ Himself pointedly addressed this matter. In one, He was personally quoted. In the other, He gave the most explicit narrative on the subject to the last living Apostle, John, with the latter passage adding clarity to the earlier one.

Those two passages are found in John 5 and Revelation 20. These are the real 'resurrection chapters'. When we 'harmonize' both, together, we can distinguish a startling clarity on this fundamental Christian Doctrine (verified as such in Hebrews 6:1 & 2) not as apparent independently. Very likely, the Gospel writer didn't fully understand this early. Below, the two relevant passages:

John 5:21- etc. *"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom **he** will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, (v.24) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ¶ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ¶ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Notice, He prefaces each phase with a 'most assuredly' then finally a 'do not marvel', as they were no doubt incredulous at what they were hearing!*

This was no 'metaphor'! It was newly revealed Truth!

Revelation 20:4 etc. *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth... (v.11) ¶ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¶ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works...This is the second death.* (from the NKJ)

For clarity, I have inserted the ¶ symbol where the narrative shifts to a subsequent resurrection.

Here, we see **three** distinct ‘judgment’ categories.

1. Those who bypass appearing before the throne, having been pre-assigned directly into **Life** and the first resurrection by Christ Himself, *then*,
2. Those who are raised physical (notice it says ‘*there is no place for them*’) have the books opened to their understanding, and for them to live by, with **opportunity** for their names to become added into the Book of Life, if deemed worthy, *then*,
3. The final sentencing phase, where all who ever lived are raised up for **final sentencing**: those who rejected their opportunity for salvation prior to the Last Trump, those who lived and died during the millennial age, those who were finally given opportunity to respond to God’s grace in the Great White Throne era, completing their physical lifetimes, and then dying the first (physical) death a

second time.¹² With these subject blocks in mind, when we read the two narratives, we can see that Christ revealed His Plan with respect to the various resurrections, and what vital role they play. Below, a ‘harmonization’ of these two, enhancing what they add to each other. Both are from Christ’s personal revelation, both thru the Apostle John. The *light italic* and the **bold italic** are retained to identify which passage is quoted.

Christ’s Own Revelation!

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years.” These are they in the first resurrection, occurring at Christ’s Second Coming, prior to the Great White Judgment Throne, in which they will also co-officiate! (1st Cor. 6:2 & Malachi 3:18)

¶ *Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ¶ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.* (to be assigned?) *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened.*¹³ *And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.* This resurrection provides opportunity for those who never had a chance to respond to God’s

¹² See my article; “*The Rejected Resurrection*” for a full explanation of this Biblically revealed scenario.

¹³ Books (greek: Biblion) The books we are to live by!

call and live ‘by the things written in the books’: their names then being added into the Book of Life. No such opportunity is referred to in the next and final resurrection. The only book referred to there is the Book of Life, and that, only for the purpose of seeing whose names are written in it!! And, notice, that final resurrection is all-inclusive! This previous one wasn’t, nor did it impose the ‘second death’!

¶ *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. . ¶ **And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works...This is the second death.** This final ‘consignment’ resurrection involves all who ever lived (excepting only those first resurrected) and is that ‘sheep from goats’ sentencing Christ explicitly referred to in Matthew 25: verses 31 – 46.*

The **first** resurrection is direct into **Life**. Then the **second** is to afford ‘judgment and justice’ to those who died never having had opportunity. The **third** is for **final sentencing** of all either to life **or** to condemnation: the second death! The second death is experienced by no-one, without their first having passed through an evaluative judgment. For the Saints of God, that evaluation period is now! ¹⁴ For the rest, the dead who were never called at least, that period is after the thousand years are finished.

Now that we can understand, from the above passages, the essential doctrine of the **resurrections** from the dead, and as a result, another one listed there in Hebrews 6: that of **eternal judgment**, how judgment and justice will come to all in their appointed time, we are ready to understand the vital purpose for the Last Great Day. God has a PLAN that ‘not any should perish’ (needlessly). That plan also happens to be His WILL! **This is the Day for ‘them too’!** After the Millennial Age, and after Satan’s brief release, those dead who never had an opportunity to know the Truth, and to respond to it,

by having received God’s Spirit, which is essential to True Salvation, will be raised again, still physical, to be offered that opportunity. They will live in an age absent of Satan’s influence, as did their physical predecessors in the Millennial Kingdom.

How Long is this Age?

We can now see that the Great White Throne era begins with the second resurrection and ends with the third! Is there any Biblical indication just how long this interval is?

We do have some indication, though perhaps God isn’t that concerned that we know just now. But, the millennial setting in Isaiah 65: gives us a clue. (v.17) *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former (Terrorist-infected Jerusalem) shall not be remembered or come to mind... For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing... No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child will die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.”* From this, we can only deduce that the new Jerusalem, during the second resurrection era, will allow these to live out their lives to the end. We see the ‘infant dying a hundred years old’, in contrast to the ‘sinner the same age dying also’. This ‘child’, if understood as being the ‘child of God’ **as opposed to** the ‘sinner’ of similar age, we can understand that all raised in the second resurrection as having the better part of a century to complete their lifetimes. Not a small concession for the extra thousand years they had to wait for their resurrection.

God is good! His Plan is infinitely good! Wish to God more people would read and believe what He has revealed to us. We can identify strongly with the sentiment expressed in the concluding words of the Book of Daniel (12:9) *“And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed til the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white and refined,... but the wise shall understand’.”* (then v.4) *“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end;”*

Isn’t this that time?

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¹⁴ 1st Peter 4:17...judgment must begin at the house of God...