

The Second-to-Last Verse

By John Cospers

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CHARACTERS

Phillip- The heavenly worship leader

God

Phillip walks on stage, facing out over the audience

PHILLIP- Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.

GOD- Approach, Phillip, leader of the Heavenly Worship.

PHILLIP- Exalted One, I need to speak with you on a matter of great importance.

GOD- I know the matter, Phillip. But please tell me.

PHILLIP- Well, Lord, we've got a real problem coming in regards to heavenly worship. As you know, long ago, we asked the worship leaders on Earth to set aside the second to last verses of hymns. If there are four verses, they skip the third. Five verses, they skip the fourth.

GOD- Mm hmm.

PHILLIP- This was done according to your will, so that those verses would only be sung here in the heavenly realms after the judgment.

GOD- Indeed.

PHILLIP- But here's the problem, Lord. Nobody's singing hymns any more!

GOD- No one?

PHILLIP- No one! Nobody wants to sing How Great Thou Art, or Count Your Blessings, or Bringing in the Sheaves any more. You know what they want? *(with disdain)* Praise songs.

GOD- No!

PHILLIP- Oh yeah. No more organ and piano duels to baroque chorales, it's all acoustic guitar, candles, and catchy little lyrics with as much substance as cotton candy.

GOD- I hate when that happens.

PHILLIP- Don't get me wrong. There's some okay stuff out there, but please, most of that garbage sounds like pop radio love tunes. Are they singing to you? Or the cute blonde on stage?

GOD- Tell me about it.

PHILLIP- And that Rich Mullins song... if I have to hear it one more time...

GOD- I know, and he's written a hundred better ones since he got here.

PHILLIP- They're not singing the hymns any more, Lord. No one knows them. What are we going to do?

GOD- We will do nothing.

PHILLIP- Nothing?

GOD- Do you not know, Phillip, that I am omniscient? I saw this as surely as I saw the birth of every human child before time began. And hence, it is part of my plan.

PHILLIP- Well, that's great. I knew I shouldn't have doubted you. Haha. Any chance you might, clue me in?

GOD- The people are busy singing their praise choruses. Now that hymnals are out and jumbotrons are in, we're going to pull an Ark of the Covenant with all those hymnals and bring 'em all up here.

PHILLIP- Oh, I see! So when the people arrive, the hymnals and all the hymns will be waiting for them.

GOD- Precisely.

PHILLIP- And by the time they get here, they'll be so sick of all those songs... they'll be aching for new material.

GOD- And they will have it.

PHILLIP- At last, those beautiful second-to-last verses will be heard.

GOD- Then after a few thousand years of singing just those verses...

PHILLIP- They get to sing the others! I get it. Wow, Lord. I'm so sorry I doubted you.

GOD- It happens all the time.

PHILLIP- I don't get that, Lord. You always come through for your people, no matter how bleak things may seem, and yet... the moment another crisis happens, we doubt again. Why do we do that?

Blackout.