

Doctrine of Crowns

1. In biblical days a crown referred to a cap, a turban, or a formal metallic crown that was decorated with jewels.
2. The placement of a crown on a person's head indicated that individual was set apart (*nezer*) for a particular task, or calling.
3. Crowns were bestowed on the high priest, and on the kings of Israel.

A crown for the high priest.



- *Exodus 29:6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.*
- *Exodus 39:30 And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.*
- *Leviticus 8:9 And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses.*

A crown for the kings of Israel.

- *2 Samuel 1:10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.*
- *2 Kings 11:12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.*
- *Psalms 89:39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.*
- *Psalms 132:18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

4. The crown could be profaned.
 - *Psalms 89:39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.*
5. The crown reflected the exalted position of the one who wore it, especially a king.
 - *Psalms 89:19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. 20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:*
6. To remove the crown was an indication of shame.
 - *Ezekiel 21:26 Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.*
7. Because a crown speaks of honor, it is a symbol of glory and joy when used metaphorically.
 - A good wife is a crown to her husband. *Proverbs 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.*
 - Grandchildren are a crown. *Proverbs 17:6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.*
 - Living to old age can be a crown. *Proverbs 16:31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*
 - Riches can be a crown. *Proverbs 14:24 The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.*
 - A good harvest can be a crown of God. *Psalms 65:11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.*
 - The Lord's loving kindness and mercy can be a crown. *Psalms 103:4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;*
 - A relationship with the Lord is said to be a crown. *Isaiah 28:5 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,*
8. In the New Testament the term used most often for crown is *stephanos*, a word used eighteen times in the New Testament.
9. The Greek word *stephanos* was used in a secular context, and referred to the victory garland at a race won by an athlete, or to the sovereign crown that the Roman conqueror wore.

10. Paul used the image of a victor's crown to speak of rewards for God's people. In contrast to the corruptible crown that will perish is the imperishable crown that goes to the Christian who completes the race.

- *1 Corinthians 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

11. The crown of the Christian is not only incorruptible, it is unfading.

- *1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

Why Does the Lord Give Crowns to His People?

12. An initial reaction to the idea of the Christian receiving a crown might be, "*Oh Lord, I am not worthy. I do not even want a reward. I am just so happy to be in heaven.*"

While that sounds sweet and spiritual, and even humble, the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves, which is why, lest we forget, the church has the commandment concerning the Lord's Supper, "*Do this in remembrance of me*". In like manner the church must have incentives to be faithful.

When life is going well for the Christian, it is easy to be faithful. But, in times of trials and tribulations, which every Christian is guaranteed to have (John 16:33), then the heart is tempted to fall away, and the Divine incentives, the rewards, become precious, and important.

This truth is reflected in Christian literature. By reading *The Pilgrim's Progress* it becomes evident that the heart of John Bunyan was encouraged by the rewards of God's grace. Bunyan languished in prison for twelve years because he refused to obtain a state's license to preach the gospel.

Even the apostle Paul was encouraged when he thought on the rewards of God.

- *2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing,*

Why does God promise rewards? The Lord gives crowns because He wants to honor those who honor Him. God will be a debtor to no man. Love gives. The Lord gives crowns because God knows us better than we know ourselves, especially in times of tribulation, He has promised rewards.

There is something else.

God does not wait to give rewards, or gifts to His people. At the moment of salvation God gives every believer at least 34 divine gifts of His grace. You and I already have been given many spiritual gifts – and there are more to come!

The Form of the Crowns

13. The Lord does not bestow literal crowns, but He does grant spiritual rewards.

- There is the crown of life. *James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. ...Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

Special Note.

The Crown of Life is reserved for those who have given their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Not all of our Lord's witnesses have been called to suffering and martyrdom. Not all would be willing to pay with their lives to take the message of salvation to the lost. How thoughtful and just our heavenly Father was when He prepared a martyr's crown for those who suffer persecution for Christ's sake! Though some of us will not receive the Crown of Life, we will rejoice with those who refused to count the cost, and have died proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

- There is the crown of glory. *1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

Special Note.

There are many who have been called, and ordained by God to preach and teach His Word. These are the under shepherds who care for the flock of God during the absence of the Chief Shepherd.

- There is the crown of righteousness. *2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Special Note.

Here the character of the reward corresponds to the character of the Giver. Both are said to be righteous. The doctrine of our Lord's return is regarded very highly by God. In spite of the fact that Jesus said He would come again, there are many people who scoff at the thought of Christ's appearing. This, and kindred truths have brought suffering and hardship, and in some cases death to those who insisted on preaching and teaching them.

But how wonderful to know that God has prepared a special reward for all who look for that blessed hope, who wait for His son from Heaven, and who love His appearing.

- There is the crown of rejoicing. *1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

Special Note.

This is the soul-winner's crown. The first thing that a Christian should pray for, and seek to cultivate, is the desire, ability, and wisdom to win lost souls to Jesus Christ. Every time an individual is converted, there is joy in Heaven; but at the day of the giving of rewards, the soul-winner will be exceedingly joyful, when those are presented to God whom he had won to Christ. What is our hope of reward as Christ's witnesses? The answer is in those who will be in Heaven because of our prayers, gifts, preaching, and personal work.

The Crowns of Glory Shall be Kept

14. The gifts of God are for the people of God, and they are without repentance, or recalling.
 - *Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*
15. Because of the nature of spiritual crowns, the believer will not be giving them back, or casting them at the feet of Jesus other than in the sense of bowing themselves before Him in submission, which is the primary image of those in Revelation.
 - *Romans 14:11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*
 - *Revelation 4:4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*
16. There are negative images of crowns in the Bible, reflecting the unholy honoring of a sovereign.
 - The locust from the pit are said to wear crowns. *Revelation 9:7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.*
 - The scarlet woman is said to wear a crown. *Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

- The Beast from the Sea, and the Great Red Dragon wear crowns.

Revelation 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

17. The one crown which must never be forgotten was the literal crown of thorns worn by Jesus at Calvary.

- *John 19:2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him with their hands.*



18. Ultimately, Jesus is worthy of all the “crowns”, or honors that can be bestowed.

Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

Crown Him the virgin’s Son, the God incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won which now His brow adorn;
Fruit of the mystic rose, as of that rose the stem;
The root whence mercy ever flows, the Babe of Bethlehem.

Crown Him the Son of God, before the worlds began,
And ye who tread where He hath trod, crown Him the Son of Man;
Who every grief hath known that wrings the human breast,
And takes and bears them for His own, that all in Him may rest.

Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed over the grave,
 And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.
 His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
 Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

Crown Him the Lord of peace, whose power a scepter sways
 From pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise.
 His reign shall know no end, and round His pierced feet
 Fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side,
 Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
 No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
 But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, enthroned in worlds above,
 Crown Him the King to Whom is given the wondrous name of Love.
 Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
 Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is King of all.

Crown Him the Lord of lords, who over all doth reign,
 Who once on earth, the incarnate Word, for ransomed sinners slain,
 Now lives in realms of light, where saints with angels sing
 Their songs before Him day and night, their God, Redeemer, King.

Crown Him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,
 Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.
 All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me;
 Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

Matthew Bridges, 1852