

# Crown Him With Many Crowns, Part 2

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In part one of our study, “Crown Him With Many Crowns,” we noted that Jesus was crowned in mock reverence as the King of the Jews. “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!’” Matthew 27:27-29.

The soldiers didn't realize it, but what they did had significance beyond their sarcasm. Like the statement offered by the high priest Caiaphas, “one man should die for the people,” this act was both profound and prophetic. John 11:50. By becoming our Savior, Jesus accepted the thorns of the curse, the reminder of transgression. It says that they “*twisted* a crown of thorns.” Just as that crown, it was by a strange but divinely ordained “twist” that He Who was the spotless Son of God would be “numbered with the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:12. Though He was pure and holy, and without sin, He became the “King of sin,” wearing the crown of thorns for our sakes. He not only bore our sin, He *became* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. He became so identified with sin that He became, as it were, the embodiment of sin. He became the “serpent” on the “pole,” according to the symbol He used when talking with Nicodemus.

One day Jesus will wear the crown that He deserves, the royal crown of the universe. Speaking of when Jesus shall return to this earth in glory John wrote, “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many *crowns*.” Revelation 19:11, 12. The term John uses to describe Jesus' many crowns is *diademata*, from which we obtain the word “diadem.” This refers to the royal crown, the crown that a king wears. This crown adorning the head of our Savior when He comes back is made of gold we're told, in contrast to the crown of thorns He wore to the cross.

When Joab, the military commander for King David, had conquered the Ammonites of Rabbah, the Bible tells us that “David took their king's crown from his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it. And it was set on David's head.” I Chronicles 20:2. A “talent” in biblical times was a measurement of weight that was roughly 50 to 60 pounds. Imagine wearing a crown that weighed 50 pounds! I suspect that he didn't wear it too long at any one time.

This gold and gem-studded crown worn by David foreshadows the golden crown Jesus will wear when He returns, when He “makes up His jewels.” His crown will glisten with the gems of His redemption, radiant in beauty. You will know that one of those gems represents your soul that He purchased at Calvary.

He comes with His crown, according to Revelation 19. He is wearing it as He breaks through the sky. Is He wearing that crown now, today? If not, when will He receive it? We're told the answer to that in Daniel 7. It will be at the conclusion of the great judgment scene revealed to the prophet, when the “court was seated and the books were opened” that He will receive His kingdom and be crowned. Daniel 7:10.

Daniel saw in vision the court session that convenes before He returns to earth. “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came (not to the *earth*, but) to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13, 14. This scene takes place at the conclusion of the Investigative Judgment, when the subjects of His kingdom are made up. This is completed before He comes back, for He comes “with His reward.” It makes sense that this is when, at the conclusion of the Investigative Judgment, when He “receives His kingdom,” that He will be crowned in glory with the *diademata* of royal authority.

During the investigative phase of the judgment, when the “court is seated and the books are opened,” Jesus wears the robes of Intercessor. He is serving as our High Priest in the holy of holies, purifying us of all iniquity, blotting out our sins. When that phase of His ministry concludes, and the subjects of His realm are finalized, He “receives His kingdom,” just prior to returning to this earth to claim His redeemed.

The timing of these events is given us in a parable told by the Lord Himself. “Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return.'" Luke 19:12. Notice the sequence delineated in this verse. Jesus, Who is the “Nobleman,” went into the “far country” (in this case, Heaven), and then “to return” to this earth. He receives His kingdom and His crown before He comes back to earth. Jesus wasn't crowned with the kingly crown when He left earth. During this portion of His ministry, when He lived among us, He served as Prophet, declaring to us the things of God. That's what a prophet does, and Jesus came to “declare Him.” John 1:18.

He doesn't wear it while He's serving as our Priest today. That's what He's been doing since He went to heaven, ever living to make intercession for those who shall be heirs of salvation, ministering in the sanctuary above which the Lord pitched and not man. Hebrews 7:25; 8:1, 2. But when that phase of His ministry closes, when His priestly work is done, He shall be crowned as King of kings, for John saw that as He returns to this earth He is wearing the golden crown He so richly deserves. At His coming He is pictured wearing a robe on which is inscribed the regal title, “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Revelation 19:16.

He is the King, and we will gladly worship Him as the rightful Ruler of the universe, a designation and position Satan has challenged through the millennia of sin. One day soon He will lay aside the censor of intercession and be crowned with the crown of royalty in preparation of coming to this earth and claiming that which was lost. What a glorious day that will be! You and I will want to add our voices in praise to the King of kings, when we see Him wearing the crown of regal authority!

As we mentioned before, in the New Testament there are two words translated “crown.” We've been thinking of the term “crown” in the New Testament that is the word *diademata*, from which we obtain the word “diadem.” This, as we've seen, refers to the crown that a king wears. This is the crown of authority and royalty. But remember that there is another word that is translated “crown” in the New Testament. Can anyone remember what that word is? It is *stephanos*. What names come into our language from that word? The names “Stephen,” and “Stephanie” come from that root. Do you remember what type of crown the *stephanos* is? It is the crown of the athlete, the victor. This, back in Roman times, was often a chaplet of apple leaves placed on the head of a winner of an athletic game, a sporting event.

We saw that Matthew uses the word *stephanos*, or athlete's crown when reporting the despicable behavior of those soldiers, even though there is no question that the soldiers were jabbing sarcasm at Jesus ridiculing His being a King. Today we want to think more particularly about the lesson conveyed by Jesus' wearing the *stephanos* of thorns, the crown of victory. This is the crown of the athlete, the one successful in a contest. This presumes that there is a contest that is taking place. Is there a contest going on now in which Jesus is engaged? Yes! There is a “Great Controversy,” which actually began in heaven when a glorious angel, Lucifer, indulged thoughts of ambition and pride and turned himself into Satan, the devil. He challenged God's throne, His law, and His Son.

Expelled, along with his angels, the scene of this contest was transferred to Planet Earth which God had just created, on which Adam and Eve were made. Through the beguiling serpent, Satan craftily seduced the woman into sin, and Adam chose to follow her in transgression. This “controversy” has raged on this earth now for some 6,000 years. When the angel pointed Daniel to the significant events that would transpire during earth's history, he said that “the message was true but the appointed time was of *great conflict*.” Daniel 10:1, margin. Yes, there's been a “great conflict” on this earth for all these years since the door was opened to sin.

Jesus, the Creator God, One equal with the Father, volunteered to become our Savior and put into operation a plan which had been in God's mind from the days of eternity. In a move that shocked the angels of heaven and Lucifer, He would set aside His “owner's” suit, His “manager's” apparel and don the uniform of the participant and step onto the field of play. He would set aside His 5-star general's regalia and put on the fatigue of a foot soldier and enter the field of battle. He would allow Himself to be the target of Satan's darts and arrows.

In doing this, He wouldn't wear the armor of His own deity, for if He did that, it would be no contest. He couldn't then be tempted by sin. The Bible clearly states that, “God cannot be

tempted by evil.” James 1:13. If He came wearing His divinity, it would have been impossible Him to fall. No, He set aside His prerogatives of divinity and came as a Man. He clearly demonstrated that not only was it possible for Adam, the first man, to resist temptation, but much more than that, that we “can do all things through Christ” Who strengthens us. Philippians 4:13.

Christ defeated the devil, not by His own power, but by continual surrender of His will to His Father and continuous reception of His life-giving Spirit. He came in a specially prepared body, a body which was unique and without parallel. In looking ahead to this unprecedented event, the psalmist wrote, “A body You have prepared for Me.” Psalm 40:8. He allowed Himself to come in a body and with a nature that would have failed in the battle against sin were it not for His surrender to His Father on a day by day, moment by moment basis. His testimony, His formula for success was “I will put My trust in Him.” Hebrews 2:13.

Imagine God, the One All-powerful, being in a position which required faith in Someone else. His only hope of victory was to live “by faith.” This was the supreme sacrifice of the Incarnation. By agreeing to lay aside His own powers of divinity and become human, He put Himself in a situation in which He would most assuredly fail if He did not surrender His will to God and live by trust in Him. If He then, having laid aside His deity, tried to “do it on His own,” in His weakened flesh, He would have failed. The devil would have overcome Him. He had to live by faith, and because of this He is our Example and Pattern.

He allowed Himself to come with a nature and in a body that was incapable of success without implicit faith in His Father's Word and power. That's amazing! Years ago Harry Houdini made a name for himself by allowing himself to be placed in circumstances from which escape seemed impossible. Restrained by a straitjacket, shackled by locks, bound by chains, encased within chests or boxes, submerged under water, crowds watched spellbound to see if the escape artist could possibly break free from the entanglements and emerge successfully. He allowed himself to be placed in these encumbering situations.

Of course, there was always a little “secret” which allowed him to extricate himself from these predicaments. He exercised and trained his body in unusual ways to heighten the response of his muscles. It is reported that he could at will dislocate almost every joint of his body so that he could collapse his body tissues and slip from handcuffs and other restraints. He was a master locksmith and gave meticulous study to how locks worked so that he could somehow defeat their purposes. Once it was reported that, having been put in another “impossible” restraint, he requested that he be allowed to give his wife a final goodbye kiss. What the onlookers didn't realize that by means of that kiss, a tiny key, a small lock pick was transferred mouth-to-mouth which enabled him to escape. As always, at the last possible moment, he would appear in triumph, to the cheers of his audience.

Christ allowed Himself to be placed in what would be considered an “impossible situation,” coming here in weak and sinful flesh, reduced in strength by 4,000 years of deterioration and without the protection of His own deity. With a “prepared body,” He entered the arena of contest, He set foot on the field of battle. Satan considered that Jesus would be easily overcome,

just as every person on this planet he had handily defeated. The “Goliath” of evil sneered at the Son of David, Who seemed ill-equipped for the engagement. In this he grossly erred in judgment. It is true that all others born had fallen in this “great conflict,” but Christ did not. He didn't defeat the devil by His own power, but by His unyielding trust in His Father. He gripped the “shield of faith,” and the other implements of the “Christian armor,” including the “Sword of the Spirit,” the Word of God, and thus successfully waged war against Satan.

The contest was brutal. Satan himself dogged the Savior's steps from Bethlehem to Calvary, inventing every form of temptation and device by which to dissuade Him from His purpose and mission. He turned His own people, the Jews against Him, who clamored for His crucifixion. He turned His own disciples against Him, who fled and denied their allegiance. Christ was left alone on the field, His “team,” His “squad” having deserted Him. The devil subjected Him to the greatest physical, emotional and spiritual temptations imaginable while on the cross in his attempts to conquer the Savior. Satan lost. Christ's faith in His Father was victorious. Even when it seemed that His own Father had abandoned Him, as He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Matthew 27:46, His faith held firm, and it was with triumph that His voice rang out in His dying breath, “It is finished.” Christ had crossed the finish line. He had vanquished the enemy.

Though it seemed that the devil had won by putting God on a cross and in a tomb, in reality he had fallen on his own sword. He was Haman hung on his own gallows. The death that Jesus died was indeed an “accomplishment,” as referred to by Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. Luke 9:31. Jesus was the divine Samson Who pulled the pillars of Satan's kingdom down by His sacrificial death.

The victor's crown? The winner's wreath? Does Jesus deserve to wear it? Absolutely! Through eternity our minds will ever contemplate the incredible achievement of the cross. His victory will be the subject of our praise and admiration forever and ever, as new insights of His triumph are revealed. Interestingly, Revelation pictures Jesus coming in the sky adorned by the *diademata*, the kingly crown (Revelation 19:12) as well as the victor's crown, the *stephanos*! “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, a golden *stephanos*.” Revelation 14:12. Jesus will come as King of kings, and as Victor over sin. Praise Jesus the King of kings! Praise God for the victory of Jesus! Praise God that He wears the crown of the winner.

As amazing as all this is, there is one more point that we should consider. Though we are weak and fallen sinners, and have failed often to reflect the character of our dear Lord, He promises that if we are faithful, we shall wear the crown. Which crown will the saints wear? Like their Savior, it will be both! We're told that in heaven we will “reign with Him.” Revelation 20:6. Undeserving as we are, through grace He will place a crown of kingly authority on us. He “has made us kings and priests.” Revelation 1:6. We will sit with Him on His throne.

As to the crown of victory, the *stephanos*, in Christ we are accounted as winners in the conflict and battle against evil. On this we have the testimony of no fewer than three witnesses; Peter,

James and Paul. Peter tells us that “when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown (*stephanos*) of glory that does not fade away.” I Peter 5:4. James counsels us, “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown (*stephanos*) of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:12. Unlike the perishable gathering of apple leaves, this is a crown that will never perish. Paul used this analogy to appeal to his Corinthian friends. “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown (*stephanos*), but we for an imperishable crown.” I Corinthians 9:24, 25.

At the close of his ministry Paul testified, “I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown, the *stephanos*, of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” II Timothy 4:7, 8. What a day that will be when we receive the crown that never fades! Let us be faithful in all that we do and surrender our will to Him each day, allowing His Spirit to mold and shape us, fitting us for heaven.