

Receiving Crowns that Reflect Our Love for God (Jas 1:12)

I. REVIEW: GOD’S PARTNERS: ENTHRONED, ROBED AND CROWNED (REV. 4:4)

⁴ *Around the Throne were 24 thrones, and on the thrones I saw 24 elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. (Rev. 4:4)*

¹² *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved (found consistent), he will receive the crown of life...promised to those who love Him. (Jas 1:12)*

A. John saw 24 elders ruling with God. The elders are faithful believers from redemptive history. The elders are **enthroned** as vessels of God’s authority (Rev. 3:21), they are **robed** with white robes referring to their priestly role and are **crowned** with golden crowns which speaks of God rewarding their deeds from this life. The elders are described in the terms that overcomers were just promised in Rev. 3, with white garments (3:5), crowns (3:11), and thrones (3:21). What happens with the 24 elders reveals God’s ideal for each redeemed person. The honor, dignity and function of the 24 elders give us insight into our eternal inheritance and spiritual identity.

B. There are significant emotional implications to knowing that we are to be enthroned, robed and crowned in our destiny before God. We feel great security, dignity and beauty. When we “feel these truths” then we view God and ourselves differently and worship with all of our heart.

C. The Lord raises the poor beggar from the ash heap to cause them to inherit the Throne of glory.

⁸ *He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the Throne of glory. (1 Sam. 2:8)*

II. GOD WILL SET HIS PEOPLE ON THRONES AND GIVE THEM WHITE ROBES

A. The Lord desires that we be enthroned at the highest authority in the created order. He has planned a way to exalt His people. His great kindness is seen in qualifying us to reign with Him. We are destined to live forever in the wealthy ruling class (aristocracy) of the New Jerusalem.

²¹ *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My Throne... (Rev. 3:21)*

B. The 24 elders play a significant role in the administration of God’s government and therefore, are prototypes of other saints on thrones who have a judicial function (Rev. 20:4). The saints with resurrected bodies who are counted worthy (*considered faithful*) during their life on earth will be made kings in the age-to-come (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17).

⁶ *They shall be priests of God...and shall reign with Him a 1,000 years. (Rev. 20:6)*

C. The elders wear white robes, which speak of their priestly role. The priests wore white garments (Lev. 6:10; 16:4). The priestly role includes worshipping, interceding and communicating God’s heart to others. We are God’s priests who best represent God forever and who mediate His glory to others in the age-to-come. God’s humility shines brightly in choosing us to represent Him.

III. CENTERPIECE OF GOD’S PURPOSE: BRING HEAVEN AND EARTH TOGETHER

⁹ *Having made known to us the mystery (hidden plan) of His will... which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the... fullness of the times He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. (Eph. 1:9-10)*

²⁰ *By Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Col. 1:20)*

- A. The centerpiece of God’s eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to fully establish His Kingdom rule over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together.
- B. Heaven speaks of the supernatural spirit realm where God’s power and presence are openly manifest. It includes the realm of angels and is the place believers go for the last 2,000 year as a “temporary holding pattern” for disembodied spirits. The saints do not have a resurrected body in heaven because they do not need one to relate to the environment of heaven.
- C. Earth speaks of the material physical realm as the place where human process and human emotions and physical sensation reach their fullest expression. The earthly realm *requires a resurrected body* to fully relate to it.

IV. WE WILL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

¹⁰ *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. 14:10-12)*

¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)*

¹³ *Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work... If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned (by lacking maturity in obedience and meekness; Jas 1:2-4), he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:13-15)*

V. GOD SETS GOLDEN CROWNS ON HIS PEOPLE

⁴ *I saw 24 elders...clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. (Rev. 4:4)*

- A. The 24 elders wear gold crowns. There are two Greek words describing two different types of crowns in the New Testament. One is the crown of a ruler (Gr. diadem), the other was the crown of a victor (Gr., stephanos) who won a race in the Greek athletic games. The Greek word “stephanos” denotes a victorious athlete who won a race (not a political ruler).

⁵ *If anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned (stephanos crown) unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Tim 2:5)*

- B. The Greek word describing the crown of the elders (Rev. 4:4) is “stephanos” which speaks of the elders wearing a victor's crown rather than a king's diadem. They were rewarded for gaining significant victories over sin in their life as they resisted temptation with endurance.

¹ *...Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus... (Heb. 12:1-2)*

¹¹ *As sojourners...abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul... (1 Pet. 2:11)*

²⁴ *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize (stephanos crown)? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown (stephanos crown), but we for an imperishable crown (heavenly stephanos crown). 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty... 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)*

- C. Stephanos crowns are only given to those who persevere in their fight against temptation (v. 12).

² *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (endurance). 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (in obedience in preparation for the Judgment Seat of Christ). 5 If any of you lacks wisdom (revelation in a trial), let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting (drawing back in double-mindedness), for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation (to be seen at the Judgment Seat of Christ), 10 but the rich in his humiliation (seasons of testing that humble him), because as a flower of the field he will pass away (if all he has is riches without humble obedience). 11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man (without mature obedience) also will fade away in his pursuits. 12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved (found consistent), he will receive the crown of life...promised to those who love Him. (Jas 1:2-12)*

- D. The stephanos crown is a "crown of righteousness" because it is related to righteous living.

⁸ *There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord...will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)*

- E. Crowns are only given to overcomers who have endurance in resisting temptation (Rev. 2:10; 3:11). God esteems, remembers and rewards our works. All our obedience is forever remembered by God, therefore, our lives have great dignity even in the midst of the mundane and routine of life. He dignifies every righteous act in our life. Thus, the things we do in this life have significance forever. God repays all our obedience so well.

¹⁰ *Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10)*

¹¹ *Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. (Rev. 3:11)*

- F. Israel's high priest wore a golden crown or miter that spoke of holiness.
³⁰ *Then they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription like the engraving of a signet: **HOLINESS TO THE LORD**. (Ex 39:30)*
- G. Stephanos crowns won in the ancient world were made of olive branches, flowers, leaves, ivy, or parsley and were used to crown the winners in wars, the Olympic games, weddings and various festive occasions. These crowns withered. Golden crowns are eternal and incorruptible.
⁴ *When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Pet. 5:4)*
²⁵ *Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. (1 Cor. 9:25)*
- H. There are nine NT references to the crowns that believers will receive from the Lord. Three times crown is referred to in a general way without giving us any details (1 Cor. 9:5, Rev 3:11, 4:8). Twice it is called the "crown of life" (Jas 1:12, Rev 2:10); once the "crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8); once the "crown of glory" (1 Pet. 5:4). Probably these Scriptures speak of different nuances of the same reward calling it the crown of "life", "glory", or "righteousness." In Rev 4:4, we see golden crowns. The crowns are described as imperishable, or not fading away (1 Cor. 9:5; 1 Pet. 5:4). Crowns can also be taken away. (Rev. 3:11). Paul refers to the faithful believers as his crown (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thes. 2:19). This seems to refer to the quality of his work being seen in the lives of those he ministered to. Stephanos crowns are referred in 1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 2:5; 4:8; Heb 2:7, 9; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev 2:10; 3:11; 4:4, 10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1; 14:14.
- I. Jesus has a stephanos "crown of the victor" for faithfully enduring temptation (Rev 14:14).
¹⁴ *Behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown (stephanos)... (Rev. 14:14)*
- J. Being crowned is a primary way in which the saints will be rewarded for faithfulness in this life. The crowns speak of one's accomplishments or acts done by the grace of God as a result of responding to Jesus in faith and obedience. The elders cast their crowns before God because their crown expressed their life of faithfulness and thus their reward in eternity.
¹⁰ *The 24 elders fall down...and cast their crowns before the Throne... (Rev. 4:10)*
- K. Paul's disciples were his joy and stephanos. Paul said he would boast in them.
¹ *My beloved...brethren, my joy and crown... (Phil. 4:1)*
¹⁹ *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? (1 Thes. 2:19)*