

CROWNS

“Crown Him with Many Crowns” is a beautiful hymn about Jesus Christ. Notice the beginning of each of the four verses:

- Crown Him with many crowns...
- Crown Him the Lord of life...
- Crown Him the Lord of peace...
- Crown Him the Lord of love...

After His resurrection, Jesus Christ returned to God to receive a kingdom (Luke 19:12-15) and He is now in heaven preparing a place for the saints in that kingdom (John 14:2-3). Soon, the Day of Trumpets will be realized with the return of Jesus Christ, now crowned as the King of Kings (1 Timothy 6:15).

Crowns are always associated with kings and rulers and various people in the Old Testament wore them: the high priest (Exodus 29:6; 39:30), Saul (2 Samuel 1:10), the king of Rabbah (2 Samuel 12:30), Joash (2 Kings 11:12), Vashti (Esther 1:11), and Mordecai (Esther 8:15) to name a few. However, not all crowns are the same.

There are several different Hebrew words that refer to crowns. The high priest and kings of Israel wore the *nezer* which is a chaplet or wreath. In the case of the high priest, the chaplet was worn on top of the *mitsnepheth* or *miter*. Then there is the *kether* that means *diadem* and is used exclusively of the royal crowns worn in the court of Ahasuerus, including Vashti and Esther. General references to other crowns include *atarah* and *tsephiyrah*, both of which simply mean *crown* but are vague about the design.

However, this is not the case in the New Testament. There are only two Greek words translated crown and the most common is *stephanos*. It means to *twine* or to *wreath* and was used as “a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor”. Specifically it is not a diadem or royal crown. The twenty four elders sitting on thrones that encircle the throne of God wear *stephanos* or *wreaths* (Revelation 4:4, 10). Similarly, *wreath* is used exclusively of the crowns given to the saints. Notice these scriptures:

- “~~crown~~ [*stephanos* = *wreath*] of righteousness,” (2 Timothy 4:8)
- “~~crown~~ [*stephanos* = *wreath*] of life,” (James 1:12)
- “~~crown~~ [*stephanos* = *wreath*] of glory,” (1 Peter 5:4)
- “~~crown~~ [*stephanos* = *wreath*] of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

These are wreaths of honor or victory for overcoming. In other words, the saints do not receive diadems, which are always worn by regal kings. The saints will be kings

in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 1:6) but they will be adorned with wreaths. This may be surprising but the evidence is in the use of the other Greek word for crown—*diadema*—from which we get the English word diadem. A diadem is a jeweled crown or headband worn as a symbol of sovereignty; that is, a royal crown, something only worn by a king with *supreme power* (Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English). This is in contrast with a wreath that is given to honor the winner of a contest.

The Greek word *diadema* is only used three times in the Bible. Notice, first, the description of Jesus Christ: "His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* **many crowns [diadema]**. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself." (Revelation 19:12). Jesus Christ will return wearing many diadems. This shouldn't come as any surprise because Jesus Christ is the King above all other kings.

However, there are two others that also wear diadems. The first is in Revelation 12:3: "And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery **red dragon** having seven heads and ten horns, and **seven diadems [diadema]** on his heads." *Dragon* is another name for Satan as explained in Revelation 12:9.

Diadema is also used in Revelation 13:1-2: "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a **beast** rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns **ten crowns [diadema]**, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. **The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.**" Here we find that the beast, having power from Satan, also wears a diadem.

It is appalling that Satan and the Beast dare to wear diadems after the manner of Jesus Christ. But then it is not surprising since Satan once bragged, "I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14). To fully grasp Satan's ambitions, notice the final temptation of Jesus Christ: "Again, **the devil** took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You **if You will fall down and worship me.**" Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, '**You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.**'" "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." (Matthew 4:8-11).

For Satan to demand obeisance from his Creator is the greatest blasphemy. In his arrogance, Satan elevates Himself above Jesus Christ, the Son of *God*! Wearing a crown is evidence that Satan wants to be *equal* with God. The Beast, who receives his power from Satan, wants to be *equal* with Jesus Christ! It is no wonder that such a demand by Satan angered Jesus (note the tenor when Jesus told Peter the same thing in Matthew 16:23). There is no one worthy to wear a diadem except Jesus Christ since only He has supreme power from God Most High. This is the reason the saints will be given wreaths for their victory over death, not diadems.

However, there is another reason that Jesus Christ is the true bearer of the regal crown. Strong's Dictionary noted that *diadema* comes from a compound of *dia* and *deo*. Individually, these words mean *through* and *bind*, respectively. *Diadema* is a compound of these words with a literal meaning of "through binding". By itself, *binding* has several meanings but one of the definitions is "to be betrothed, to pledge, or to give oneself in marriage". In other words Jesus Christ wears a crown that is not just a symbol of royal authority; it also represents Jesus Christ as the Husband of the saints! Jesus Christ is King of Kings and the bride of the saints will be joined to Him through marriage. He *is* the only and true "King of saints" (Revelation 15:3)!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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