

THE PROMISE OF CROWNS

by James P. Dawson

The crown is the symbol of victory or award of the highest honor or rank. It is also the symbol of royalty and authority. God has made the conditional promise of five crowns to the believers. They gave Christ a crown of thorns, a symbol of ridicule, at His crucifixion, but God turned this crown into our salvation and to Christ's glory.

And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon 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 27:29
And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, Mark 15:17
And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, John 19:2

God has also appointed Israel to be His crown of glory, (2) but this crown is in the future. Israel is now His chosen people, but they have not attained their promised place. Throughout their history they have been in a rebellious-repenting cycle. Scripture states that the day will come (3) when they turn to the Lord in a day. (4) I think this is the day when they become His crown of glory. This crown is not a conditional crown because the Israelites will turn to God. The Scripture also promises crowns for the believer, but these crowns are conditional promises. You have to meet the requirements to receive the crown.

The Crown of Victory, the incorruptible crown, is given to those individuals who accept God's gift of salvation.(6)

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 crown. I Corinthians 9:25
Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever... " I Peter 1:23

The acceptance of the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior is the only requirement for this crown. Being a good, honest moral person will not result in winning the incorruptible crown, although some churches imply that it will, without Jesus this activity will only bring a corruptible crown. They also call this the Crown of Righteousness.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day. 2 Timothy 4:7-8

When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, He takes our unrighteousness (8) and gives us His righteousness. (382) This makes us pure and acceptable before the Lord. Once we are in the Lord, we should try to follow His will for our lives, and oppose the forces of evil. (383)

There is also a Crown of Life, the Martyrs Crown, available to those who have suffered for Christ's sake.

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. Revelation 2:10

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. James 1:12. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day for your reward is great in heaven. Luke 6:22

This special Crown of Life, the Martyrs Crown is reserved for believers that are faithful, that endureth temptation and are tried. This does not mean we will not sin (384) or cannot receive this crown if we fall or fail. He has promised that we will not be tempted past our endurance and that He will provide an escape.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. I Corinthians. 10:13

Some claim to be suffering for Christ who are only using this excuse for raising money for their own purposes. Some TV evangelists are always on the verge of financial collapse and some raising money for the suffering children of the world are not using the funds for the intended purpose. Their overhead and administrative costs absorb most of the funds. These individuals will not receive this Crown, but will answer for their deeds.

The Pastors will receive a special Crown of Glory. If the pastors and preachers preach the truth and sound doctrine in love, they will receive this special crown. They must "feed the sheep" for love of God, not for position or money.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. I Peter 5:2

They must not be dictatorial, but teach by love and example. There will be some who claim this crown, but Christ will tell them to depart, He knew them not. (387)

This Crown of Glory is also available to soul winners, if they are pastors or not. It is called the Crown of Rejoicing, the Soul Winners Crown. (388) If you ever witness the expression in an individual's eyes when he is first convinced by the Holy Spirit of the truth of God and receives the gift of salvation, you will want to witness at every opportunity. Some churches tell us not to confront unsaved individuals with the prospect of hell, because you might embarrass them or hurt their feelings. However, I believe that embarrassing them is better than to see them burn in hell.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. **II Timothy 4:1-5**

Therefore, we should constantly witness, witness by example, and by word.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Isaiah 62:1.

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? For ye are our glory and joy. I Thessalonians. 2:19-20.

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

Phillipians 4:1

There is also a special crown for those who love His appearing and are not ashamed of His Coming.

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. **II Timothy 4:8**

Now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. **1 John 2:28**

Many people do not want the Lord to come now. They want Him to delay His coming. They say "not yet, there are so many people we have to reach," but they usually are not the ones who are witnessing. Some are satisfied with their current life and do not want it changed. These people do not understand what is in heaven, the joy, the love that is there. Some just are not sure about their own salvation and do not have the courage to seek the answer. They are afraid they might be embarrassed or ridiculed if they admit their insecurity. They think they are believers because they were born into a Christian family and have gone to church all their lives, but have not made that individual decision for Christ. One should claim and rejoice in His Promises and proclaim it to the world. Rejoice because this world is quickly meeting all the signs of His return.

The Bible states there are other crowns for the individual, but these crowns are not spiritual crowns but symbolic. For example, Proverbs lists two such crowns.(389) One of the most blessed names given a woman is "grandmother." As Proverbs stated, grandchildren are a total delight to their grandparents. We overlook the failings of our children and grandchildren and take pride in telling others about them. However, we do not express our love and pride in our Lord to others in the same manner.

Proverbs states: Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life. **Proverbs 16:31**

I can attest to this verse, because I had long wavy hair but now it has long waved good-bye. What is left is grey and I know it is not a measure of my righteousness, because Christ gave me His righteousness.

The crowns that are available to us are:

The Crown of Life (Martyrs Crown) Revelation 2:10

The Crown of Glory (Pastors Crown) I Peter 5:2.

The Crown of Rejoicing (Soul Winners Crown) I Thessalonians 2:19.

The Crown of Righteousness (Love His Appearing) II Timothy 4:8.

The Crown of Victory (the Incorruptible Crown) I Corinthians 9:25.

When do we receive these crowns? We are only told that at His coming He comes with His rewards. I think that we will receive our crowns at the Wedding Feast. The Scriptures do not say this, but I think the wedding feast will be like an awards banquet. All the believers are there, the church saints; the tribulation saints and Christ. The guests will be the heavenly host. Each will receive his rewards, the crowns, the treasures he has stored in heaven and the other blessings from the Lord. When Christ returns (391) and we have received the crowns that are promised, what are we going to do with the crowns?

The Scriptures do give us some idea:

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. . . . the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and worship Him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne . . . Rev. 4:4,10. We will lay our crowns before Christ just as the elders did, because He is deserving of all glory and honor.

Cited References

- (1) **MAT 27:29** And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon 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!
- (2) **ISA 62:1** For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.
- (3) **MAT 24:15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

MAR 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.

(4) **JER 24:7** And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall unto me with their whole heart.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

Zechariah 1:3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. unto me, and I will unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we?

(5) I Corinthians 9:24-27 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.

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

(6) Ephesians 2:6-10 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

(7) II Timothy 4:7-8. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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.

(8) Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

(382) I Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

(383) Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

(384) Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:

(385) I Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

(386) **IPE 5:2-3** Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lord over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

(387) **LUK 13:27** But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

(388) **1TH 2:19-20** 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? For ye are our glory and joy.

PHI 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

(389) **PRO 17:6** Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

(391) **REV 14:1** And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

1CO 9:24-27 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.

1TH 2:19-20 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? For ye are our glory and joy.

2TI 4:7-8 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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.

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REV 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.