

## Crowns

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

- 1) Crown Him with many crowns...
- 2) Crown Him the Lord of life...
- 3) Crown Him the Lord of peace...
- 4) Crown Him the Lord of love...

After His resurrection, Jesus returned to God to receive a kingdom (Luke 19:12-15); 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 Christ, now crowned as the King of Kings (I Tim. 6:15).

Crowns are always associated with kings and rulers, and various people in the Old Testament wore them: the high priest (Ex. 29:6; 39:30), Saul (II Sam. 1:10), the king of Rabbah (II Sam. 12:30), Joash (II 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*. *Diadem* was used exclusively of the crowns worn in the court of Ahasuerus, including Vashti and Esther. General references to crowns use *atarah* and *tsephiyrah*, both of which simply mean *crown* but are vague about the design.

This is not the case, however, in the New Testament. There are only two Greek words translated *crown*. The most common is *stephanos*, of which *Strong's* says: “From an apparently primary ‘stepho’ (to *twine* or *wreath*); a *chaplet* (as a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor generally; but more conspicuous and elaborate than the simple *fillet*, literally or figuratively.”

Specifically, *stephanos* is not a diadem. The 24 elders sitting on thrones that encircle the throne of God wear *stephanos* or wreaths (Rev. 4:4, 10). Similarly, *wreath* is used exclusively of the crowns given to the saints. Notice these scriptures:

II Timothy 4:8—“crown [wreath] of righteousness”

James 1:12—“crown [wreath] of life”

I Peter 5:4—“crown [wreath] of glory”

Revelation 2:10—“crown [wreath] of life”

These are *wreaths* of honor or victory for overcoming. In other words, the saints do not receive *diadems* as are worn by regal kings. The saints will be kings in the Kingdom of God (Rev. 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*.

*Strong's* says *diadema* (diadem) refers to something “*bound about* the head.” A diadem is the crown of the king with *supreme power* (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English*), whereas a *wreath* is given to honor the winner of a contest.

*Diadema* is only used three times. Notice, first, the description of Christ: “And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many **crowns** [diadema]; *and* He had a name written that no one knows except Him” (Rev. 19:12). Jesus returns wearing *many diadems*. This shouldn't come as any surprise, because Jesus is the King above all other kings.

However, there are two others who also wear diadems: “And another sign was seen in

heaven: and behold, **a great red dragon**, having seven heads and ten horns, and **seven crowns** [diadema] on his heads” (Rev. 12:3). “And 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 upon his heads *the* name of blasphemy. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and his feet like *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth like *the* mouth of a lion; and **the dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority**” (Rev. 13:1-2).

Besides Christ, only Satan (the red dragon, Rev. 12:9) and the Beast wear “diadem” crowns. Satan once bragged, “I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14). To fully understand Satan’s ambitions, notice the final temptation of Jesus: “After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, **if You will fall down and worship me.**’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Begone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.” ’ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and ministered to Him” (Matt. 4:8-11).

For Satan to demand obeisance from his creator was utter blasphemy! In his arrogance, Satan elevates Himself above Christ, the Son of God! Wearing a crown is evidence that Satan wants to be *equal* with God; and the Beast, who receives his power from Satan, wants to be *equal* with Christ! It is no wonder that such a demand by Satan angered Jesus (note the tone 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. This is the reason the saints will be given *wreaths* for their victory over death, not diadems. However, there is another reason that Jesus alone is the true bearer of the regal crown. *Strong’s* notes that *diadema* comes from a compound of *dia* and *deo*. *Dia* denotes the channel of an act and is often translated *through*. *Deo* means *to bind*.

*Diadema*, then, is a compound word meaning “through binding.” Of itself, *binding* has several meanings, and most Greek wordsmiths include: “to be betrothed, to pledge to give oneself in marriage.” In other words, Jesus wears a crown that is not just a symbol of royal authority, **it also represents Christ as the Husband of the Church!**

Jesus Christ is King of Kings, and the saints will be *joined* to Him through marriage. He is the only and true “King of saints” (Rev. 15:3)!