



"My crown is in my heart, not on my head."
—William Shakespeare

01-Jan-21

The Crowns of Success (Part One)

In the New Testament, the Bible speaks of five crowns [God](#) promises to faithful Christians that He will give them after Christ's return as [King of kings](#). Some who advocate for this idea view these as five different rewards—the crowns of glory, incorruption, life, rejoicing, and righteousness—for five separate Christian actions.

Is this so? As seekers of truth, we must determine if these crowns are figurative or literal and if they are several crowns or different aspects of the same crown. We also need to know whether all Christians receive them.

We can begin by examining the two Greek words translated as "crown" in the New Testament, *stephanos* and *diadema*. In a *Forerunner* article, "The Crown of Life," Martin Collins writes: "Today, the terms 'diadem' and 'crown' are used synonymously. However, it is important to understand that there is a difference between them. The difference has spiritual connotations to the future glorified sons of God."

Strong's Concordance describes *diadema* as "the kingly ornament for the head." Martin writes, "The New Testament writers used *diadema* when they wanted to symbolize royal power, authority, or dignity." In contrast:

Stephanos describes the victor's crown, the symbol of triumph in the public games or a contest. It can also be the reward or prize given to honor a person. Though the word can denote a crown of royalty, its more usual sense is the laurel wreath awarded to a victor, or a festive garland worn when rejoicing.

The Oxford English Dictionary comments that *stephanos* refers to "the foliage of the bay tree woven into a wreath or crown and worn on the head as an emblem of victory or mark of honor in classical times." [The Symbols Project](#), a website that provides information on symbols associated with burials, comments, "Laurel leaves are above all a symbol of eternal glory, of special achievement, success, and triumph. It has long been a symbol of victory."

The five crowns promised to Christians in the New Testament are all from the Greek word, *stephanos*, which, as we saw, are symbols of honor for accomplishment, success, and victory.

Of course, we cannot earn salvation, but our God is a God of blessings and rewards. The apostle Paul writes in [Ephesians 2:8-10](#) (New Living Translation):

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Our salvation is by God's grace, but He will reward us based on how we use it.

First, consider *the crown of glory*, mentioned in [I Peter 5:2-4](#):

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain,

but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but by being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

"Glory" translates the Greek word *doxa*, which means "magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace." Although Peter's exhortations seem to apply just to the ministry, God has given us all spiritual responsibilities, and He expects us to mature into teachers and leaders whom others will follow. Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

The apostle John saw our Savior's glory, which he tried to describe in [Revelation 1:13-16](#). Along with His spectacular garments, John saw that Christ's face "was like the sun shining in its strength" ([Revelation 1:16](#)). Perhaps more stunning to us, in an earlier epistle, John writes, "When He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" ([I John 3:2](#)).

Together, Peter and John show us how we can succeed and receive the reward of this crown of glory. Paul, in [Colossians 3:4](#), confirms, "When Christ, who is our life appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory." He writes similarly in [Philippians 3:21](#), "[Christ] will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body."

Second, consider *the crown of rejoicing*, mentioned in [I Thessalonians 2:19](#): "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?" Paul's crown of rejoicing, he says, was his Christian brethren. Again, recall that a *stephanos* is not a crown of rulership but of victory, appreciation, and success.

[Hebrews 6:10](#) reads, "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints." Considering all of Paul's work for others, all the countless people he helped, his reward will be great. The same applies to us and what we do for others to help them toward salvation.

David writes in [Psalm 16:11](#), "In [God's] presence is fullness of joy; at [His] right hand are pleasures forevermore." We may not all do the same job, but we all have one purpose, and God will reward each of us with true joy

according to his or her labors. God allows each of us the opportunity and the privilege to join with Him in the salvation process, and we rejoice in His salvation, the ultimate triumph of those who have rejoiced in hope, looked for deliverance, and patiently endured tribulation ([Romans 12:12](#)).

Third, consider *the crown of righteousness*, mentioned in [II Timothy 4:8](#): "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown 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." Paul had earlier written to Timothy: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, [faith](#), love, [peace](#) with those who call on the Lord out of a [pure heart](#)" ([II Timothy 2:22](#)).

[Psalm 119:172](#) states that all of God's commandments are righteousness. Paul explains in [II Corinthians 5:21](#) that God "made Him who knew no [sin](#) to be sin for us, that *we might become the righteousness of God*" (emphasis ours). Through Christ's shed blood, we are justified, that is, brought into alignment with the standards of God and declared righteous.

But as Paul told Timothy, we are also to seek righteousness through godly living. Struggling against the pressures to sin is hard work, but with Christ's help, we can all obey God's commandments, achieve victory, and be awarded the crown of righteousness when our Lord and Savior returns.

Next time, we will continue examining the rewards promised to faithful Christians at the [revelation of Jesus Christ](#).

- John Reiss

Church News & Special Announcements

Andrew and Regina Ulmer are pleased to announce the birth of their second child, **Timothy Levi Ulmer**, at 4:50 AM on Tuesday, December 29, 2020. He weighed 9 lbs., 13 oz., and was 23 inches long. Mother and baby are doing fine. Timothy is the second grandchild of **Rex and Ginger Ulmer**. Congratulations!

29-Dec-20

New Transcripts

[1233B: Israel's Immigration Problem](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 25-Sep-14

[1304: Malachi's Appeal to Backsliders \(Part One\)](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 16-Jan-16

[1320: 'All Mine Are Yours!'](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 30-Apr-16

[1345: Habakkuk: A Prophet of Faith \(Part Four\)](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 08-Oct-16

[1393: Leadership and the Covenants \(Part Twenty-One\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 19-Aug-17

[1576B: Life in the Church](#)

Given by David C. Grabbe on 26-Dec-20

[1576c: Hollywood Propaganda: The Insidious LGBT Agenda \(Part One\)](#)

Given by David F. Maas on 26-Dec-20

Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Jackie Eggers](#)

[Dan Fletcher](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Mike Ford](#)

[Lucy Guingon](#)

[Emma Morse](#)

[Emma Morse](#)

[James Priester](#)

[Kondwhani Sakala](#)

[Musonda Sakala](#)

[Musonda Sakala](#)

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Crown of Life](#)

by Martin G. Collins

We do not think much of crowns these days, but one awaits us if we continue in the faith! Martin Collins researches the kind of crown we will receive when we enter God's Kingdom.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Amos (Part Three)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 01-Jan-21**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

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