

Sermon #78¹
Doctrine

Series: Bible

Title: **BELIEVERS AND THEIR CROWNS**
Text: Revelation 4:4, 10, 11
Readings: *Office: Buddy Daugherty Auditorium: Bobbie Estes*
Subject: *The Crowns Of Heaven*
Date: Tuesday Evening -January 12, 1999
Tape # V-6a
Introduction:

Revelation 4:4, 10-11 "And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold... (10) The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Tonight I want us to take a glimpse, just a glimpse, within the veil. Without the evil of vain curiosity or speculation, but with faith, hope, and expectation, I want us to look into some of these things which concern our eternal estate in the glory of heaven.

I realize that we know very little about heaven and the eternal bliss of God's elect there. We know that there is a place of eternal bliss in the presence of God and the holy angels where the people of God shall dwell when time is no more. We know that heaven is a place of happiness, bliss, glory, peace, and love, a place of perfect righteousness and truth, where neither sin nor

¹ See Sermon #592 preached at Danville - 7/24/84, Pine Grove Baptist - Houston, TX 8/13/84, 13th Street, Ashland, KY - 9/2/84, Kitchens Creek, Ball, LA - 12/3/84, Bible Baptist, Madisonville, KY - 11/25/84, 1st Baptist, Kingston, Jamaica - 1/21/85

sinner can enter. But beyond these things, we know little. The Holy Spirit has saved up the details of the next world, refusing to reveal them until we get there. *“As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”* (1 Cor. 2:9).

- We do not know where heaven is.
- We do not know what our heavenly bodies will be like.
- We do not know what the events of eternity will be.

We know much about what will not be in heaven. There will be no sickness, no sorrow, no sin. There will be no darkness, no disappointment, no death. There will be no corruption, no care, no crying. There will be no trials, no temptations, no tears. But we really know very little about what there will be in heaven. For now ignorance is best for us. If we knew more about our heavenly inheritance, we would most likely neglect our earthly responsibilities. If all the glory of heaven were revealed our feeble hearts and minds could not now contain it. If we knew more of the future we would probably neglect the present; and that must not be.

However, there are some things plainly revealed about the believer’s eternal inheritance in heaven. And those things that are revealed are revealed for our present encouragement, enjoyment and consolation. Our text this evening speaks of the people of God before the throne, in the presence of our great and glorious Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The “four and twenty elders” represent the whole company of the redeemed in heaven. They are representatives of the whole church of Christ, the whole company of God’s elect. They represent all of those who were chosen of God, redeemed by Christ, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and glorified

in the resurrection. These twenty-four elders bear the characteristics of all the saints in their glorified state. **These twenty-four elders reveal seven things about our eternal bliss in heaven.** They tell us seven things which are true of all the people of God in the eternal glory.

1. **They are all clothed with white raiment - The righteousness of Christ.**

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

2. **They all worship the Lamb** (5:8).

<p><u>Revelation</u> 5:8 "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four <i>and</i> twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."</p>
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3. **They have all been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.**

In that great eternal day, it shall come to pass, as we have so often sung -

When this poor, lisping, stammering tongue,
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save.

4. **They are all around the throne.**
5. **They are all kings and priests unto God.**

6. **They shall all reign with Christ on the earth.**

7. **And they shall all have “on their heads crowns of gold.”**

These crowns will be our subject for tonight. I want us to think together about **BELIEVERS AND THEIR CROWNS.**

Proposition: According to our text, all the people of God shall have crowns of gold on their heads in the beginning of heaven's glory.

Divisions:

1. What are these crowns?
2. Who shall wear these crowns?
3. How do we obtain these crowns?
4. What shall we do with these crowns?

I. WHAT ARE THESE CROWNS?

Reading through the New Testament, I find that there are five separate and distinct crowns promised to believers, which God shall give to his saints.

A. There is AN INCORRUPTIBLE crown which is the reward of perseverance (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. (25) 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. (26) I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: (27) But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Like runners in a race, the believer must press on, persevering unto the end. He that finishes the race wins the prize. There is no reward to those who quit and fall by the wayside (Phil. 3:13-14; Heb. 12:1-3).

B. There is A CROWN OF LIFE which is the reward of faithfulness to the Lord (Rev. 2:10; James 1:12).

James 1:12 "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."

Revelation 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."

Those whose trials destroy their faith never really had any true faith. They shall perish. But those who are faithful in their trials prove that their faith is genuine. And they shall have the crown of life.

C. There is A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which is the reward of those who love Christ at his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

2 Timothy 4:6-8 "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. (7) I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: (8) 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."

All who love Christ and love his appearing shall receive the crown of righteousness. All believers do!

D. There is A CROWN OF REJOICING which is the reward of those who seek the salvation of God's elect (1 Thess. 2:19-20).

1 Thessalonians 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? (20) For ye are our glory and joy."

"Children's children are the crown of old men" (Prov. 17:6). When our Lord Jesus Christ comes in his glory to gather his elect from the four corners of the earth, and he presents them all to his Father, saying, *"Behold, I and the children which God hath given me"* (Heb. 2:13), as he rejoices in the salvation of his elect and the fulness of his body, the church, so will we.

- **Paul was not saying**, "I glory and rejoice in the fact that I was the instrument of your conversion" (Compare 1 Cor. 3:7).
- **He was saying this** - "I glory and rejoice in the salvation of God's elect, because the salvation of God's elect is the glory and joy of Christ."

E. There is A CROWN OF GLORY which is the reward of our union with Christ (1 Pet. 5:4).

1 Peter 5:4 "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

When Christ comes, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. He said, *"The glory which thou gavest me I have*

given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:22).

There is the Incorruptible Crown, the Crown of Life, the Crown of Righteousness, the Crown of Rejoicing, and the Crown of Glory. What are these crowns? Why, all of these crowns are one crown, and that one crown is the Lord Jesus Christ himself! It is written, “*In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people*” (Isa. 28:5).

Christ is the prize we seek. Christ is the crown we shall wear. Christ is the reward of his people. What more could we need or desire? Christ is heaven. If I have Christ, I have all. I want no more! He is my Glory. He is my Joy. He is my Righteousness. He is my Life. He is my Incorruptible Crown.

Illustration: *Bro. Cavanaugh*

II. WHO SHALL WEAR THE CROWNS?

According to our text, all the saints of heaven are kings and priests unto God; and they all are crowned as such; and all their crowns are the same - “*crowns of gold.*”

We do not believe the doctrine that there are degrees of reward in heaven, degrees of glory, and degrees of happiness among the redeemed. It is nowhere written or implied in the Word of God! Upon the very surface of things, that doctrine is apparently false. It promises a reward of debt. It promotes pride and self-righteousness. It says that some things are earned by human works as wages that God must pay. It makes our acceptance and joy in heaven dependent upon our own works, not upon the grace of God. It gives man honor, praise, and glory.

Let this heresy be rooted out and dashed to pieces once and for all!

A. The notion that there will be degrees of reward in heaven runs contrary to everything that is most plainly revealed in the gospel (1 Cor. 4:7).

1. Our salvation and acceptance before God is a matter of pure, free grace (Eph. 2:8-9).
2. All the blessings of God were given to all of God's elect in Christ before the world began (Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:9).
3. God never accepts, much less rewards, anything but perfection, and our perfection is in Christ. - **Perfection requires a perfect reward, and in Christ we are perfect** (Col. 2:10).
4. Our Lord plainly states that our reward shall not be based upon the merits of our service, but upon the purpose of his grace (Matt. 20:1-16).
5. The Lord God alone shall have the praise of heaven.

When we have done the very best that we could do, it is infinitely less than we should have done. We are all unprofitable servants.

NOTE: Do you really want God to reward you according to your merits? Who can stand before Him? - "*He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.*"

B. We do not serve our God being motivated by a desire for gain. We serve the Lord our God being motivated by love and gratitude (2 Cor. 5:14). God will never reward greed!

C. The bliss, the glory, the happiness, and the reward of God's elect in heaven shall be equal to all and full in all.

1. All are equally loved of God.
2. All are equally redeemed by the blood of Christ.
3. All are equally righteous in Christ.
4. All are equally heirs to the covenant of grace and the promises of God (Eph. 2:11-13).

Who shall wear these crowns of gold? All the true people of God. Not one of God's elect shall be robbed of any heavenly blessing or privilege.

III. HOW DO WE OBTAIN THESE CROWNS?

We see the twenty-four elders around the throne with crowns on their heads. Those elect of God who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ out of every tribe and tongue and nation in the world are wearing crowns of pure gold. But how did they get those beautiful crowns of glory?

A. They got their crowns by the grace of God.

Grace 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

'Twas grace that wrote my name
In God's eternal book;
'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.

Grace taught my wondering feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made mine eyes o'er flow,
'Twas grace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go!

B. They got their crowns by hereditary descent (Rom. 8:16-17).

There are none in heaven but the sons of God; and the sons of God shall have their rightful inheritance.

C. They got their crowns by sovereign predestination (Eph. 1:11-12).

<p><u>Ephesians</u> 1:11-12 "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."</p>
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D. They got their crowns by rightful claim.

- They were purchased for them - The blood of Christ.
- They were earned for them - The righteousness of Christ.
- They have been made worthy of them (Col. 1:12; Eph. 5:25-27). Christ himself has already claimed them in our name (Heb. 6:20).

Children of God, rejoice, laugh in the face of your trials and troubles here. Soon you shall wear a crown! God will see to it.

IV. WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THESE CROWNS?
(Rev. 4:10-11).

Revelation 4:10-11 "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, *(11)* Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

No sooner shall the Lord God place the crowns on your head and mine than we will willingly, gladly take them off our heads, bow before the feet of our God and Savior, and cast them down at the foot of the throne of his sovereign majesty and grace, saying, "*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake*" (Psa. 115:1). Why?

A. Christ alone is worthy of honor, praise, and glory.

1. He chose us.
2. He redeemed us.
3. He called us.
4. He preserved us.
5. He brought us to glory.

B. We will cast our crowns before his throne, because we will have a solemn reverence for him.

We shall see him as he is, and we will say, "*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*" "*He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*"

C. We will cast our crowns before his throne, because we will be filled with a deep sense of sincere humility.

- I am nothing.
- I have done nothing (Matt. 25:34-40).
- I deserve nothing.

D. We will cast our crowns before his throne, because we will have a deep sense of gratitude to him.

“I am what I am by the grace of God.”

E. We will cast our crowns before his throne, because we will love him intensely.

In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing, as I cast down the glittering crown from my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

Application:

1. Do you have such a hope and expectation as this? Do you expect to enter heaven by the grace of God through the blood of Christ and be crowned with everlasting glory? Are you anxious to cast your crown at the feet of Christ? Begin now to do so.

- Give the Lord the praise and honor due unto his name.
- Worship Christ with reverence.
- Humble yourself before him.
- Show your gratitude to Christ by your zeal for his glory.
- Show your love to Christ by your self-sacrificing, self-denying service and devotion to him.

2. Would you wish to be among those twenty-four elders, the church of God's elect, worshipping Christ in eternal glory? Bow before his throne of sovereign mercy now.

- Submit to Christ, and crown him Lord supreme.
- Trust Christ, and crown him Savior divine.

If we meet not again upon this earth, I will meet you, children of God, around the throne of our Redeemer, where we shall cast our crowns at his feet and say - *“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and blessing.”*

Amen!