



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 11

July 6, 2025

No. 27

The Crown

by Wayne S. Walker

A few years ago, I had to have a gold crown put on a tooth that kept chipping. As I was sitting in the dentist's chair waiting, I realized that the word "crown" appears quite frequently in the New Testament, so when I arrived back at the office, I studied it.

Our English word "crown" comes from a Middle English root, which in turn comes from the Old French, based on Latin and Greek roots meaning garland or wreath. There are actually two words in the New Testament translated as "crown." The first is the source of our English word "diadem," which means a kingly crown. It is used only of Christ or those pretending to have His authority.

The other one, more commonly found, is the source of the name Stephen, which means the victor's crown. It refers to the garland or wreath of laurel leaves placed on the head to reward those who won athletic contests in ancient Greece. As a result, the term "crown" is often used in the New Testament figuratively to refer to the reward that God has promised the faithful in heaven.

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12). Consider these passages that describe the crown for which we labor.

It is an incorruptible or imperishable crown. "And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (I Corinthians 9:25).

Everything on this earth is perishable because it is a place "where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19).

After a few years, that crown of laurel leaves would become so brittle that the slightest touch could cause it to disintegrate. Even a crown of gold, which may last thousands of years, will be destroyed when Jesus returns (II Peter 3:10). However, our reward in heaven is "*an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away*" (I Peter 1:3-5).

It is **a crown of rejoicing**. "*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?*" (I Thessalonians 2:19). Because of all the wonderful blessings that we have from God, certainly in this life Christians can "*rejoice in the Lord always*" (Philippians 4:4).

Indeed, Christians of all people have more to rejoice about than anyone else. Yet, the Bible also says that there is rejoicing in heaven even now (Luke 15:7). Just think of the great joy that will be experienced by God's people when all the redeemed get home, where "*...there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying...*" (Revelation 21:4).

It is **a crown of righteousness**. "*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*" (II Timothy 4:8). Because all of us have sinned, only Deity is perfectly righteous, as Pharaoh confessed (Exodus 9:7).

However, because of His great love for us, God has made it possible, through the death of Jesus Christ, that "*by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous*" (Romans 5:19). Then, when we get to heaven, we shall finally be made perfectly righteous because we know "*...that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God...*" (I Corinthians 6:9).

It is a **crown of glory**. "*And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away*" (I Peter 5:4). While this statement is made specifically about elders, remember that the crown will be given to all who love His appearing.

The word "glory," which appears to involve brightness and splendor, first refers to the nature and acts of God by which his innate and infinite worth is seen. Stephen was granted a glimpse into heaven of the glory of God (Acts 7:55).

Next, it is used of the praise and honor due God because of His worth. "*...Our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and forever. Amen*" (Galatians 1:4-5). Then, it identifies the state of blessedness into which believers will enter hereafter through being brought into the likeness of Christ. "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Romans 8:18).

It is a **crown of life**. "*Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10).

The term "life" is used in scripture to indicate a right relationship with God. Jesus said, "*...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10). Just as certain things such as water and food are necessary for physical life, so for our spiritual life, Jesus gives us "*living water*" and is "*the bread of life*" (John 4:10; 6:35).

Of course, we know that someday physical life on earth will end. But to those who come to God through Jesus Christ, the Bible says, "*And this is the promise that He has promised us — eternal life*" (I John 2:25).

In the gospel song, "Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It," Fanny J. Crosby wrote, "I know there's a crown that is waiting In yonder bright mansion for me."

Do you want to receive this crown? You cannot earn it solely by doing good works, because all of us have sinned and no amount of good works can atone for even one sin. Rather, it is a gift of God. But what did James say? The Lord has promised this crown to those who love Him. How do we show our love for God?

"*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome*" (I John 5:3). Therefore, to meet the Lord's conditions for receiving this crown, we must keep His commandments or obey Him, being faithful until death. May we ever press on toward that crown as long as we live. LaVista 10/11/24