***Glory, Honor, Worship and Crowns

RV89-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 4:6-11 as we continue dealing with worship in the throne room. This is segment number 20.

**God's Throne Room**

The apostle John, as you remember, has been transported into God's heavenly throne room in a vision. There he sees God the Father sitting upon his throne. The Father's glory is displayed with the brilliance of colored light, and His faithfulness to His Word is symbolized by a halo-shaped rainbow around the throne.

**The 24 Elders**

The Father's throne, furthermore, is surrounded by 24 thrones, which are occupied by elders who represent the body of Christ, the church. These elders wear white garments, signifying that they have experienced ultimate sanctification, and they have golden crowns on their heads. These are crowns of honor for special victorious service. From the throne of God itself, there are symbols of impending judgment upon the tribulation earth in the form of lightnings, thunders, and rumblings of the forces of nature.

**Seven Flaming Torches**

John also sees seven flaming torches which symbolize the ministry of God the Holy Spirit in relation to church-age believers. These torches symbolize the power of the spirit of Jehovah (God indwelling the believer); the spirit of wisdom (divine values for a meaningful life); the spirit of understanding (spiritual discernment to perceive reality as it is); the spirit of counsel (divine viewpoint advice to guide the decisions that we make); the spirit of might (the power to execute God's will in our lives); the spirit of knowledge (Bible doctrine information stored in the human spirit); and, the spirit of the fear of the Lord (the aspect of God's respect for God's Holiness and for His power). These seven spirits represent the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to the believers in this age.

**The Sea of Glass**

Then John sees, before the Father's throne, what looks like a sea of glass. This symbolizes the laver in the Old Testament tabernacle, which was used for the washing of the priest's hands and feet before ministering before God. This was the basis of temporal fellowship. It represented experiential sanctification. The water in the laver signifies the Word of God, which the Bible declares cleanses the mind. This heavenly sea that John observes commemorates the earthly cleansing which we use in 1 John 1:9.

**Four Living Creatures**

Then John sees four living creatures surrounding the Father's throne. These are angelic beings of the cherub type who are responsible for guarding God's holiness. They stand as an honor guard at the four sides of God's throne in heaven. These living creatures speak to us of God's governmental authority over His creation and over man. That's why we say that He makes the rules as per His essence. God calls the plays, and anybody who violates that authority now comes up against the holiness of God. Satan himself was once a cherub angel. He violated that holiness, and for that reason, was cast out. These four living beings, or living creatures, are cherub type angels who stand there to guard the holiness of God.

**The Faces of the Cherub Angels**

On these angels, there is a multiplicity of eyes which indicate their perfect discernment in executing God's will. He also notices that each of them has a different face. The faces of these living creature angels symbolize features of God's government over His creation through the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the living creatures had the face of a lion, signifying the role of Jesus Christ as king of Kings and Lord of Lords, as is portrayed for us in the gospel of Matthew, exercising sovereign authority. Another living creature had the face of a calf, signifying Jesus Christ as the servant of the Father as portrayed in the gospel of Mark – sent to be the sacrifice for the sin of mankind. Another had the face of a man, signifying Jesus Christ as the Son of man as portrayed in the gospel of Luke. Jesus Christ is complete humanity. Then the fourth living creature had a face of an eagle, symbolizing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as portrayed in the gospel of John, and conveying to us the fact of the complete deity of Jesus Christ.

These living creatures proclaim the holiness of the triune God who lives forever and has all strength. So, they sound forth, "Holy, holy, holy." The Scriptures say that they do this day and night. Periodically, they proclaim the holiness of God, ascribing holiness to each member of the Trinity. This is a true picture of the nature of God.

**Eastern Mysticism**

Satan presents a false picture of God as an impersonal force who is residing in all matter. Satan's God, therefore, has no standards of right and wrong, and man himself is a part of God, and thus becomes a source of the truth itself. The Eastern mysticism of Hinduism, that we have looked at in some detail, expresses Satan's teachings to deceive mankind about the true nature of God as seen by John in Heaven. That's one important thing that you do not want to miss about this scene – that what John is saying is portraying a true picture of the nature of God, and of the conditions of man relating himself to that God.

**The Doctrine of Demons**

Satan's picture is a picture of deception. The Bible calls it the doctrine of demons. Eastern mysticism teaches such doctrines of demons, because it is Satan's prime substitute for the scene that John sees in heaven. So, Eastern mysticism says:

* That God is an impersonal force;
* That God is not a person;
* That God is part of the material universe itself;
* That there are no objective standards of right and wrong;
* That man is part of God because man is material, and so man is also deity;
* That salvation is simply man recovering his awareness of his own deity;
* That truth is found in one's subjective feelings;
* That reason must be bypassed;
* That reality is to be found in one's personal experiences, and not on the basis of objective evidence such as the Scriptures;
* That an attitude of positive thinking can bring about one's desires;
* That negative thoughts produce evil and sickness;
* That everyone must design his own plan for his life;
* That the power of the impersonal God force is demonstrated by psychic and occult experiences;
* That meditation, with a passive mental attitude, produces an altered state of consciousness, which enables one to receive teachings from the universal mind;
* That Jesus Christ was merely a superior psychic who achieved a higher state of God consciousness than others, and that gave him power to use the universal force;
* That man has no sin nature, so he has no moral problem with a holy God. Psychiatry attributes problems to society and to environment, not to a sin nature;
* That everyone is working out his own karma to pay for his bad actions;
* That everyone has repeated reincarnations after death to get another chance to continue working out your karma until you have satisfied the demands of an impersonal justice;
* That the mantra sound places one under the power of a demon spirit and brings one into a position of great force;
* That the material world is an illusion which does not really exist;
* That miracles are merely the expression of man's innate psychic powers;
* That God has a dominant female aspect to his nature, so that there is the mother goddess.

All of these are doctrines of demons, and all of these are the things that are commonplace in American mentality today. This is the way people think. All of the avenues of information are pressing home this kind of thinking – these doctrines of demons. I know you have become well aware of these, because many of you have been coming to me and telling me where you have spotted it, now that you have become alerted to it. I'll tell you something else. There are a lot of forces that did not want you to know about these things. You would be surprised how much flack and how much resistance that particular series has drawn forth, because when we alert people to the nature of Eastern mysticism and how that controls the mind of people today, we are treading upon the territory that Satan cannot afford to have exposed. He must keep that in the dark. So, I hope you will appreciate the information.

**Revelation 4:9**

We now begin at Revelation 4:9, where we read, "And when those living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him that is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever." Here is the expression of the worship of the living creatures in verse 9. The word "when" is an important word. It looks like this in the Greek Bible: "hotan." This is what is called a Greek particle, and it conveys a conditional sense about things that are expected to occur in an indefinite future. The idea that this word is conveying is "as often as." So we would translate it by a word like "whensoever" or "whenever." It is introducing something that happens repeatedly rather than continuously in heaven. You're now going to have portrayed a scene by John that happens on occasion. That's what this word "hotan" is telling us. On occasion, this takes place. It doesn't happen all the time. It isn't continuously repeated. But on occasion, this is what takes place.

This takes place on the part of these living creatures that we've already become acquainted with – these who are described by the word "zoon." These are the ones that were introduced to us in Revelation 4:6 – these four living creatures surrounding the throne of God. These living creatures give glory. The word "give" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "didomi." This word connotes ascribing something to the Father. It is in the future tense, which again tells us, along with the word "hotan," that periodically in the future, forever, something takes place in heaven. This is done by the living creatures themselves. It is active voice. The mood is indicative, indicating a statement of fact.

**Glory**

So, we would translate the first part in this way: "Whensoever the living creatures shall give;" that is, as often as they give. What they give, first of all, is described as "glory." The Greek word looks like this: "doxa." This word in classical Greek primarily signified an "opinion" or an "estimate" that one would hold about another. Here it connotes a good opinion of the Father, and that results in adoration and exaltation in the form of worship. The Father possesses infinite value because of His essence; His sovereignty; His absolute righteousness; His justice; His eternal life; His love; His omniscience; His omnipotence; His omnipresence; His immutability; and, His veracity – all of this that forms His character. All of this, which constitutes the essence of God, is visibly manifested as brilliant light – as a majestic splendor.

So, the word glory refers to the radiance of God because of the essence of God – because of the perfect character of God. This is the same word which was used to describe the brightness of Jesus Christ when He experienced His transfiguration on the mountain that's described in Luke 9:29-32. You have the brilliance of light that surrounded Jesus Christ described as His glory.

Then it was the brilliant light of God's glory that sent Paul to the ground in blindness in Acts 22:6-11. The thing that is described in those verses is the glory of God which is seen as a burst of brilliant light to the degree that it made Paul blind when he saw it.

We are told that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth encased in the brilliant light of His Father's glory. Mark 8:38 tells us that. So, when Jesus Christ returns, He will return in this same brilliant light of glory. This is one of the ways indeed that you can tell the difference between the real Christ and all the false Christs that are running around. You will have no mistake about the real Christ. You'll barely be able to look upon Him in the brilliance of light that will surround Him. The false Christs never have that kind of evidence at all.

The living creatures ascribe glory to God the Father because of the brilliance of God's perfect character and essence. God's character is genuine. He is what He really claims to be. So, in 1 Timothy 6:16, Paul has this to say: "Who only have immortality dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." There Paul is saying the same thing – that God, because of the perfection of His character; because of His essence; and, because He really is what He claims to be, portrays this in the brilliance of light that is displayed so that no one can see Him or approach Him.

Satan, on the other hand, pretends to possess glory. So, the Bible tells us that he moves about as an angel of light. But he lacks the Father's perfection. Satan actually is encased in darkness, and Satan actually someday will be cast into total darkness.

So, the praise of the living creatures is, first of all, to ascribe glory. When they ascribe glory to God the Father on the throne, they are recognizing His character; the perfections of that character; and, that the Father is what He really claims to be.

**Honor**

Secondly, they also ascribe honor. The Greek word looks like this: "time." The word primarily means "a valuing of someone." Here it refers to the preciousness of the Father to the human race. The living creatures are ascribing an infinite value to the Father because of His position as the Creator. They reflect an attitude of submission and homage when they ascribe this kind of honor to God.

Of course, we're talking about things that you and I should be doing for Him. As we shall see in a moment, the elders sitting upon the throne, following in uniform affirmation of what the living creatures are saying. We, too, as believers, should be ascribing glory to the Father. We should be recognizing the perfection of His character. Thus we should not be attempting to deal with God in such a way that we would expect Him to compromise His character. That's why it's important to know some of these basic qualities of the essence of God, so that you are not trying to live, and not trying to deal with God in such a way that you're actually asking Him to compromise His own character. His glory will not permit that. We should ascribe honor to Him as well. The rebelliousness of humanity does not honor the Father or His revelation of truth, as we have it in the Bible. Instead, the Scriptures are arrogantly dismissed as unsophisticated nonsense and ignorance. And rebellious humanity says, "We can make our own rules." But the living creatures know the real truth, and they shout it all over God's heaven. That's the idea of this word "time." It is honoring God because of the infinite value that He possesses, and the infinite right, therefore, that He possesses in making the rules. He is the Creator. The word "honor" means that you are in subjection to Him; that you recognize Him; and, that you are in submission to Him.

If people were doing that, we would have a stampede to the Scriptures for finding out the answers that confront us in all of our social institutions as well as our personal lives. But there is not, in our country today, a stampede to the Scriptures at all. Instead, those who do stand for the Scriptures are viewed as oddballs – somehow out of touch with reality. They are pitied because the general impression that people have is that the Bible is a mixed-up book that nobody can understand. And if you want to believe it, it's alright, but you don't have to do so.

**Thanks**

Then the living creatures had a third expression that they ascribed to God, and that is "thanks." The Greek word looks like this: "eucharistia." This is a word that expresses gratitude. The "char" part of the word comes from the precious Greek word "charis." The word "charis" means grace – the favor from God which we do not deserve. This root word expresses a feeling of joy. The word "charis" conveys a feeling of enormous joy; of a great delight; of a great satisfaction; and, of a great sense of pleasure. It stands for everything about which one rejoices and is grateful for. So, it is significant that the word "charis," which represents joy and gratefulness for what is significant, should be at the heart of the word for thanksgiving: "eucharistia." The living creatures proclaim their gratitude for the joy that they experience in the Father's presence, and their happiness over His works, including the work of creation.

However, mankind is contemptuous of the idea that men owe their blessings to the Father rather than to themselves. The living creatures know that the Father is motivated by love to provide every good thing, while Satan is motivated by hatred and self-ambition, simply to use people for his own ends. The supreme joy of the living creatures is giving thanks, and the Father will soon triumph over Satan and his followers. They know it, and they're grateful for it, and it fills them with joy. So, when they are ascribing thanks to God, they are ascribing thanks to the living Father for what He has done for them; for what He is going to do; and, for all the things that the Scripture has revealed that lie in the future.

We are on the threshold here of discovering what's going to happen in the immediate future of this world. With Revelation 5, we are going to enter with the immediate events that are going to take place after the church is removed from the earth. Here in Revelation 3, these 24 elders indicate to us that the church has been raptured. It sits in heaven. It is clothed in its white robes of ultimate sanctification. Everybody is now perfect, and they have upon them the crowns of reward for service. They are waiting now for God to vindicate Himself (His Holiness) in how He deals with the rebelliousness of the world. The living creatures know this, and it just makes them so happy that they just thank God for it. They burst out in this expression of praise.

It is not an insignificant thing if our nation has the good judgment to designate a national day of thanksgiving to our God. It is not a small thing for us to gather as believers and to do the same thing which these living creatures have done to express our thanksgiving to God. It is amazing how Thanksgiving Day comes along, and people do everything under the sun, but the last thing on earth they think about doing is gathering together with a group of believers, and to express their mutual thanksgiving for what God has done; for who He is; and, for where history is moving.

These living creatures, because of all the eyes that they have on them, indicate to us that they're in the know. They have the whole story. They know the contents of the Bible backwards and forwards. They've got all the information. They know where history is moving. They know about the terror that's about to break forth upon the earth. And they know that shortly down the line, a few years from this point of time, the world is going to have its golden age in the millennial world, with Jesus Christ back on this earth ruling from Jerusalem. It fills them with such joy that they go to "eucharistia." They go to thanks. When you're happy; when you're delighted in God; and, when you take pleasure in Him, you will discover that you will also be a thankful person. You will catch yourself thanking the Lord all day long for this thing and that thing, as your attention comes to it, or your experience comes into contact with it. You will remember Him for what He is. These living creatures, from time to time, here in God's throne, room burst out with an expression of praise, and they ascribe to God the glory that portrays His perfect essence as seen in His brilliant light. They ascribe honor to Him because He deserves their loyalty and their faithfulness, and they ascribe thanks to Him because of His provisions and the faithfulness to His own words.

Then, in the last part of verse 9, the worship is specifically said as being directed to the Father on the throne. It says, "Those living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him that is seated." "To Him that is seated" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "kathemi." "Kathemi" refers to God the Father in the sitting position on the throne. It's present tense, which indicates that that's His regular position in heaven. It is active in meaning. The Father does the sitting. It's participle, indicating that it's a spiritual principle stated of the Father's supreme authority. What the Father is indicating in this position on His throne is that He is the supreme sovereign authority. He sits upon his throne. That is the Greek word "thronos," which stands for the imperial authority.

He is described as "the one who lives. That is the Greek word "zao." This word means to be alive, in contrast to the status of death. It's present tense, which means this is God's status continually – always living. It's active. It means that this is the nature of God's existence. He is a God who lives. It is a participle – a spiritual principle stated of the continual existence of God. This word clarifies for us that God the Father is not an impersonal force as the Eastern mysticism of Hinduism teaches. You don't need anything else out of the Bible to counter the whole system of Eastern mysticism than this one verse. It declares that the one who sits upon that throne is alive. He lives. Revelation 7:2 expresses the Bible's revelation about the living God: "And I saw another angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God. And He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Revelation 7:2 expresses the fact that the authority of what is done, is done on the part of somebody who is living and can execute.

Satan, as you have learned from our study of Eastern mysticism, has been going around trying to convince people that God is dead. He's the Star Wars' impersonal force. He's not really out there. So, the living creatures, as created life, rightly adore the uncreated life that made them – the uncreated God who made them. So, they stress the fact that the one on the throne is alive. Therefore, He is a person. He is the one who lives forever and ever. Literally, the Greek Bible says "unto the ages of the ages." That's a peculiar Greek expression to say "eternity." It has the preposition "unto." Then the word "ever" is the word "aion." That means "age." So, it says "unto the age," and then it says it again: "of the ages." "Unto the ages of the ages." It's the strongest Greek way of expressing the idea of eternity.

Greek culture used to contrast this phrase, which meant "interminable duration," with something that came to an end. So, it identifies the Father on the throne as an eternal one. That is, He had no beginning, and He has no ending of days. God the Father, therefore, is not subject to the time which He made. He has no beginning and no ending. He's not subject to time. God is not dependent for His existence on another. So, there is no threat to His eternity. No power can terminate the Father.

Because you and I had a beginning, then we are subject to somebody terminating us. That is why the concept of eternity is important. The God we worship describes Himself in a term that we mentally cannot grasp. He had no beginning. The reason that's important, and the reason the Bible stresses that, is to make it clear that there is nobody who can terminate God.

If Satan had understood this doctrine adequately, he never would have rebelled. He would have caught the fact that the eternity of God means that nobody can terminate Him. Nobody can be superior to God. Nobody can have greater power than God. God's existence is independent of time. Therefore, He remains immutable. God is not in transition through various stages of being. He describes Himself as "I am." The Father is the one from whom all succession of events originate. He is not subject to those events. God is unchanged in His knowledge and in His essence. There's no attribute that God is acquiring. He never was less than perfect. He is uncaused, so He has no beginning, and therefore, He cannot cease to be. That which can cease to be is only that which had a beginning. If it never had a beginning, it can never have an end. That's kind of a philosophical concept, but it is one that the Bible stresses significantly. It is important that these living creatures stress to us that the one who is on that throne is the eternal one. He never had a beginning, and thus He will never have an end.

Then in verses 10-11, we come quickly to the worship of the elders themselves. The 24 elders surrounding the Father's throne are representatives of the entire body of Christ. When they hear what the four living creatures have just said, they suddenly are moved to stand up from their thrones, and to fall down to the ground in obeisance before the Father's throne. The word "fall" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "pipto." Verse 10 says, "The 24 elders fall down before Him that is seated on the throne." The word means "to prostrate themselves on the ground in homage and worship." This again is future, which means they do it periodically. Periodically, when they hear God praised, they respond. It is to their benefit to do so. And it is an indicative statement of fact. We are told that their fall is "before." This word looks like this in Greek: "enopion." It is used here to mean "in the presence of." The act of obeisance is done before God's throne – in the Father's presence.

You will notice that the elders were totally unmoved during previous things that were taking place here in heaven. In verse 5, John observes that some very frightening things are coming out of the Father's throne. Lightning flashes come bursting out of the throne. Thunderclaps are heard, and then the rumblings of nature in turmoil, like earthquakes, and so on. There's an awesome sound and sight. This was the original light-and-sound show that you hear so much about in various relationships today. This was a light and sound show that caused John's eyes to bug wide open. What he was hearing and what he was seeing was scary. And he caught the connection that God is about to demonstrate (to explain) something of divine judgment upon the earth.

However, the elders just sat there. They sat upon their thrones. They sat there all relaxed. They didn't move. They were not disturbed. They were not excited in the presence of the very symbols that indicated the threat of God's divine judgment. Why is that? They have no anxiety over divine wrath in heaven. There's no trembling upon them before the Father's throne, because they are now totally compatible with the essence of God. They are totally compatible with the glory of God. They are totally compatible with the honor of God. They are totally related to the Father in such a way that they do not fear His Holiness.

So, put your mind at ease. The sins we struggle with; the failures that we're guilty of; the shortcomings; the things we despise about ourselves; and, the fractures of our walk with the Lord – none of that is going to keep you from standing in heaven someday completely relaxed without one iota of fear of the wrath of God. If that is true in heaven, you may understand that it is true now. You have nothing to fear from the wrath of God in terms of your eternal fellowship. If you persist in sin, you've got plenty to fear in terms of your temporal fellowship. The discipline, I assure you, will be there. But in terms of your eternal destiny, put your mind at ease. That may be a small thing to you, but there are millions of people in churches everywhere who have been conned about that point. If they understood what these verses together were implying about the attitude of these elders, they would realize that they don't have anything to fear, and that God is their friend.

The thing that does move these elders from their thrones is the sound of the worship of the Father by the four living beings. Their sense of eternal security – that moves them. And that's what should cause you to rise to your feet when we have these times of testimony meetings, and when we have these times when we're gathering in the Lord's presence. Your sense of worship is the thing that should propel you to your feet with an expression of praise. These elders just could not restrain themselves when they heard the living creatures expressing this kind of praise to the one who sat upon the throne.

**Worship**

So verse 10 says, "They fall down before the one who is seated on the throne, and they proceed to worship Him." The word "worship" is an interesting word. It's "proskuneo." "Proskuneo" is made up of the word "pros," which is a preposition meaning "towards;" and, the word "kuneo," which means "to kiss." So, when you put it together, it literally means "to kiss towards." It's an act of reverence. It's like what Catholics do when the Pope comes along and he holds out the papal ring to them, and they reach up and they kiss the ring as a sign of reverence, and as a sign of subjection to his authority.

So, this word expresses the recognition of the right of the Father, as the living Creator God, to receive the church-age believers' adoration and subjection. He deserves it. Again, its future. Any time in the future that the praise of God is heard, this is the reaction of the elder. It's active voice, which means the Christian does the worshiping. It's a statement of fact in the indicative mood. True worship is an attitude of mind toward God's revelation of Himself and Scripture. That's what worship is. It's an attitude of mind. It is not a matter of rituals that you may perform through your human flesh. It is the attitude of joyfully acknowledging the supreme worthiness of God and all that He has said. The highest expression of worship is what you do in a gathering like this, where you sit with an open attitude of spirit and mind and heart, and you listen to see what God has said. The moments that you spend learning doctrine are the highest moments of worship.

So, please don't confuse worship with some ritual that you perform; some moment of listening to an inspirational piece of music; or to some warm emotional response that you've had to something. The highest moment of worship is looking at God and saying, "You're right. You have told us the truth, and it makes us so happy to have been enlightened, and not to have been left in ignorance." It is the recognition of the Father's right to receive our adoration and our subjection because He has the truth.

Many people are reluctant to know the truth. Many people are reluctant to learn what the Bible says, because it will interrupt their worship of themselves. They prefer to worship themselves. The more you know about the Word of God, and the more doctrine you know, the harder it is to worship yourself. There are some people who are smart enough to know that, and they say, "Wait a minute, I don't want to learn too much of the Word of God because it's going to interfere with my lifestyle." What does that mean? "It's going to interfere with my self-worship." The more you know of the Word of God, the more you want to respond like these representatives of ours in heaven (these 24 elders) who fall down on that sea of glass before the Father's throne and worship Him. It's an attitude of mind toward the Scriptures.

The one who is worshiped is the eternal one who really exists. The one that they're worshiping is not a creature – some created demon that is worshiped as a god, as paganism does. This one who is worshiped is not a human being who claims deity. The Mormons have a terrible time with this verse, because the Mormon people are told that they're all going to come to a state of exaltation where they themselves will become gods; they themselves will then have the power to go out and create a world; and, they themselves will then create human beings who will then worship them. And these human beings will have their own society. They'll have their own earth on some planet out there. I'm not telling you something that is theory. I'm telling you something that some of our Mormon parents in Berean Christian Academy have sat down and told me face-to-face that this is what they're looking forward to – that someday they will be gods who have created their own world, and who will have their own group of humanity which will be in subjection to them.

However, that's not so in this scene. There's no man sitting upon this throne. The one who sits here is the living eternal Creator God. We don't worship someone who is dear to us on a human plane who receives our primary devotion. You have to be careful of that. Within your family group, there can be somebody who is so precious and important to you that you, in effect, worship that one above God. If you had come to a choice between taking that one and God, you'd have to think twice. Unless you're a solid worshiper of the living God, you'd say, "I'd rather keep my little kid. I'd rather keep my husband. I'd rather keep my wife. I don't want to swap. I'd rather have them than God." You'll soon see whom the one is that you really do worship. The God who one day we must all face is the one who John sees upon this throne – not some creature, but God.

Something else is also clear from this scene in heaven. The message of the Bible drives this home periodically in two solid words. For example, in Revelation 19:10, John says, "And I fell at His feet to worship Him, and He said unto me, 'Do not do that. I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.'" Those two dramatic words sum it all up. Every now and then, John gets so moved by what he sees that he can't restrain himself, and he falls out and starts worshiping one of these creature angels. The angels say, "Wait a minute, don't do that. I'm just a creature like you are. Worship God."

You have the same expression in Revelation 22:9, where John does it again: "Then he said unto me. 'Do not do that, for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren, the prophets, and of them who keep the words of this book. Worship God.'" And that's an interesting connection. The angel says, "I'm just one of the creatures of God, and I keep the words of God's revelation. I keep the words of Scripture. So, worship God." If you keep the words of Scripture, and know the words of Scripture, you'll worship God. You're not going to worship your boyfriend; your girlfriend; your family; your business; or, something else.

These elders, in the process of worshiping God, have fallen down before Him. They've been moved to their feet by the praise that they hear from the living creatures. They stand to their feet. They worship God: the one who lives forever and ever; the one who is on the throne; and, the eternal God. In the process, "They cast down." That is the Greek word "ballo." That means "to throw" or "to hurl down." These elders cast down the golden crowns, which they have on their heads, before the Father's throne. It is future. Any time in the future that they hear the praise of the living creatures, they do this. It's active voice. The elders themselves lay down their own crowns. It's indicative mood – a statement of fact of what happens. This act demonstrates that the rewards that the crowns of honor represent are theirs only because of the Father's infinite grace toward them. It isn't anything that they have done. It is what He has done that has given them that crown.

This indicates that there is nothing too much to place at the Father's feet in worship. The word "crown" is the Greek word "stephanos." This is the Greek word for the victor type crown – the laurel wreath that they used to put on the head of the athlete who won. It is not the diadem crown of the ruler. This is the crown that symbolizes triumph in some contest. This crown is a symbol of honor given by God to certain Christians for exemplary Christian service and living. Not everybody in heaven is going to have a golden crown. These crowns of honor are entirely the product of the Father's grace through the Word of God, and that's why they cast them at His feet. These special honors are described in Scripture as the crown of rejoicing in Philippians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20. This is an honor for the victory of a daily life of divine good production in God's service. These are good works produced through the believer by the indwelling Holy Spirit. There are some Christians who are going to come into heaven, and they're going to have such a load of divine good production because they lived a life where God the Holy Spirit could work through them. God is going to give them a crown of rejoicing.

**Crowns**

One of these golden crowns, that some of you are going to wear, will be that kind of a crown. There's the crown of righteousness in 2 Timothy 4:7-8. This is honor for the victory of a personal godly life that is living in the spiritual status of temporal fellowship instead of carnality. There are some Christians who stay in fellowship, and consequently, their lives bear fruit. That is significant. For those who log maximum time in the status of personal spiritual fellowship, they get a crown of righteousness. There is the crown of life in James 1:2 and Revelation 2:10. This is honor for the victory of maturing spiritually to the super grace status, and staying there – not falling back through reversionism. Some Christians never make it to super grace. But for those who do, and those who stay there, they have the capacity to handle poverty; to handle prosperity; to resist evil; and, to remain stable under times of trial. God says to those, "I'm going to give you a crown of life," and they will be honored. These are like Congressional Medals of Honor.

Then there's the crown of glory. It's a rather exclusive crown. It's talked about in 1 Peter 5:4. This is honor for the victory of a pastor-teacher elder of a local church who teaches Bible doctrine principles consistently and faithfully to his flock. This is the elder pastor-teacher who is capable of resisting the pressures to be popular in style, and relevant to the people's interest. This is the one who is able to take the flack for being an instructor of divine viewpoint truth that the Holy Spirit wants the congregation to have, rather than what the people want to hear.

They cast these crowns before the throne of the Father in heaven. That disclaims their independence. Then they add another tremendous, joyful declaration that is fraught with extreme significance, joy, and meaning in verse 11. And we shall pick that up next time as they make the declaration following the casting down of their crowns.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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