

The Hymns We Sing
Sermons on the Great Hymns
Crown Him With Many Crowns
Revelation 19:11-16

With Study Questions

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2/24/2002*

Crown Him With Many Crowns

Revelation 19:11-16

This hymn was written by two Anglican clergymen who never met. Each desired to write a hymn of exaltation to our suffering but now victorious Lord. Verses 1, 4, 5, 6 & 9 were written in about 1852 by Matthew Bridges. Godfrey Thring wrote verse 2 and 3 in 1874, 23 years later (the authorship of verses 7 and 8 is uncertain).

Each crown in this hymn text exalts Christ for some specific aspect of His person or ministry. At the end of these notes you can view all nine original stanzas. The four stanzas we are most familiar with exalt Christ (1) for His eternal Kingship; (2) for His victorious resurrection and ascension; (3) for His magnificent condescension and bearing of sin and; (4) for His eternal love demonstrated by His willingness to lay down His life.

Crown Him with many crowns

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. (Revelation 19:11-13).

The hymn begins with the acknowledgment of Christ as the King of all. The passage we just read culminates with the acknowledgment of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). The kingship of Christ, along with Prophet and Priest, is an office of Christ that must be respected. Whether it be church, family, or state there is only one true and ultimate King who judges evil, protects His citizens and deserves our allegiance.

As a pastor it is my duty to preach His word with the assumption that all who have eyes to see will acknowledge and acquiesce before His kingship with trust in His wisdom and protection, and fear of His judgment.

The Lamb upon His throne

And yet it is a lamb upon the throne. In Revelation 5:4-7 we read of John weeping for no one is worthy to open the scroll of judgment on the persecutors of the church. One of the elders comforts John by saying **“Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll.”** Then John looks, not seeing a lion but a Lamb. The enemies of

righteousness will face a lion, but those who trust in the Lord have been covered by the blood of the Lamb.

It is important to note that the advancement of the kingdom of God is by the blood of the Lamb, hence the emphasis on the preaching of the gospel and administration of the cup and the loaf. This must not merely be accepted by the church but prominent in the church. It is not enough for the pastor to agree in his chambers that he accepts this teaching; he must herald it.

Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,¹² saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing (Revelation 5:11, 12)!"

The heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own. We may get little glimpses of this in our Christian sanctification. The thunderous realization of how certain godly truths annihilate the opposition. The abortion issue is a good example for many of us. The loudness of this atrocity extinguishes the petty arguments to a point of frustration. We wonder how they cannot hear. But in the presence of God the anthem of His truth and glory will drown all the ditties of ungodliness.

Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee

Your dead shall live; *Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead (Isaiah 26:19).*

I am personally opposed to emotional manipulation in a church service. Our worship should not be confused with a sing-along at the local concert. Yet at the same it seems incongruous that those who have been awakened by the anthem of victory over death should sing as if they are still half asleep. It is not the job of the chief musicians to extract unwilling enthusiasm. The hymn says it correctly. The worshiper, by the grace of God, is seeking to talk some sense into himself when he says "awake my soul and sing."

And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity

Who *is* like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

¹²You stretched out Your right hand; the earth swallowed them. ¹³You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided *them* in Your strength to Your holy habitation (Exodus 15:11-13).

A relatively common theme in Scripture is “Who is like You, O Lord.” The implied answer to the rhetorical question being ‘no one.’ **“Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (John 6:67, 68).** It is not uncommon for people to deny the Christian faith and worldview. What is uncommon is for them to give any plausible alternative. God is so matchless that the attempts at counterfeits are generally laughable.

Crown Him the Son of God, before the worlds began

And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was (John 17:5).

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who always was and never changes. To relinquish Him to the category of a mere man, angel, or other created being, does not lessen the Christian faith, it destroys it. For no mere man can bear the eternal judgment of God for those He came to save.

And ye who tread where He hath trod, crown Him the Son of Man

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom *the one* which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13, 14).

I haven’t counted, but I understand ‘Son of Man’ to be the most common designation Jesus used for Himself. The learned student would have recognized this term from Daniel where the Son of Man ascends victorious to the Father. God the Son became a man and won the victory for men by virtue of His sacrifice for them. Men sinned; therefore a man had to be punished. Or as the Larger Westminster Catechism puts it, “Why Was It Requisite That the Mediator Should

Be Man? **Answer:** It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace." The hymn, in a manner consistent with the confession, continues...

Who every grief hath known that wrings the human breast

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15).

There is an intimacy our Savior has with His bride that exceeds all levels of human understanding. He doesn't save us by e-mail or some distant correspondence. He became a man with all man's sorrows.

And takes and bears them for His own, that all in Him may rest

For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

As parents we often see our children creating consequences for themselves that they cannot bear. I'll hear my one-year-old crying in the other room only to find her standing on top of a desk or table she can't get off of. Men, in their rebellion against God, created the consequence of darkness and death. Jesus rescues men by taking their sin upon Himself and granting His righteousness to men; this is double imputation.

**Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save**

Peter preached that at the resurrection of Christ, Jesus "**loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it**" (Acts 2:22-24). Paul then teaches us that the risen Christ is the "**firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).**

Jesus triumphed over death, not for Himself, but for His bride, the church. He is the Lord of life and life itself.

**His glories now we sing, Who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.**

Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:23-25).

Jesus lives that death may die. He ever intercedes for us, that is, He maintains that which He accomplished. He rescues and preserves us. And He will reign until He has conquered all His enemies, the last being death itself (1 Corinthians 15:25, 26).

Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side

We are taught what the greatest act of love is by Jesus when He says, **“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).** When Jesus laid down His life for the sins of the world, it was the pinnacle of love for which He is crowned the Lord of love.

Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified

The wounds of Christ are used by Peter as signs of our victory and salvation (1 Peter 2:24). And the wounds did not disappear after the resurrection. They are eternal reminders of His great love.

All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me;

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

The hymn becomes quite personal at this point. We have two types of relationship with God, a corporate relationship and a personal relationship. To overly emphasize one over the other has disastrous consequences. The kingdom of God is not all about me. The chief end of God is not me and the issues in my life; it is to glorify Himself and that through His church. Yet at the same time

that the church is God's Holy Temple, it is made of living stones. And it is not to be forgotten or ignored that Jesus died for those stones, hence they live.

Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

We shall end this morning's message with the biblical declaration of the eternal glory of God.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5).

Crown Him With Many Crowns

(the nine original stanzas)

Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

Crown Him the virgin's Son, the God incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won which now His brow adorn;
Fruit of the mystic rose, as of that rose the stem;
The root whence mercy ever flows, the Babe of Bethlehem.

Crown Him the Son of God, before the worlds began,
And ye who tread where He hath trod, crown Him the Son of Man;
Who every grief hath known that wrings the human breast,
And takes and bears them for His own, that all in Him may rest.

Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.
His glories now we sing, Who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

Crown Him the Lord of peace, Whose power a scepter sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end, and round His piercèd feet
Fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side,
Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to Whom is given the wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is King of all.

Crown Him the Lord of lords, who over all doth reign,
Who once on earth, the incarnate Word, for ransomed sinners slain,
Now lives in realms of light, where saints with angels sing
Their songs before Him day and night, their God, Redeemer, King.

Crown Him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me;
Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

Questions for Study

1. Why is Christ pictured as wearing many crowns (page 2)?
2. Discuss Christ as a Lion and as a Lamb (pages 2, 3).
3. How does the heavenly anthem drown out all other music (page 3)?
4. What would it look like to “awake and sing” (page 3)?
5. What are some alternatives to God? What are their strengths and weaknesses (page 4)?
6. Why is it critical that Jesus be God (page 4)?
7. Why is it critical that Jesus be man (pages 4, 5)?
8. What did Jesus experience as a man (page 5)?
9. What is double imputation and why is it vital for the Christian to understand (page 5)?
10. How did Jesus triumph over the grave and what does that mean to those who are His own (page 5)?
11. Why is it imperative for us to acknowledge the living Christ (page 6)?
12. What was the supreme act of love (page 6)?
13. What are the two types of relationship Christians have with God and why is it important to consider them both (pages 6, 7)?