

CROWNS CAST BEFORE GOD'S THRONE

PART I

WHO WILL CAST THESE CROWNS?
Why Will These Crowns Be Cast?
When Will These Crowns Be Cast?

By Arlen L. Chitwood

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter [‘after these things’].

And immediately I was [‘I became’] in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

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.

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever,

and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:1, 2, 4, 10, 11).

Immediately following events surrounding the judgment seat, attention is again called to that previously seen in Rev. 1:10 — John being removed from Man’s Day and placed in the Lord’s Day, depicting the Church being removed from Man’s Day and placed in the Lord’s Day. And, calling attention to the same event again at this point in the book would show the dispensational nature of the removal of the Church — a removal occurring at the end of the dispensation (at the end of that seen in chs. 2, 3).

But, with events surrounding the judgment seat already having been dealt with (in chs. 2, 3, viewed from the perspective of ch. 1), John is now shown subsequent events. In this chapter, John is shown events which will occur immediately following those surrounding the judgment seat and the revelation of the bride; and these subsequent events will occur preceding the beginning of the Tribulation (6:1ff).

THE HEAVENLY SCENE

Immediately after attention has been called to the same event seen in Rev. 1:10 (Rev. 4:1, 2a), John, rather than seeing a judicial scene (as in ch. 1), now sees a rainbow encircled throne, with God seated on the throne (vv. 2b, 3). And surrounding this throne, John sees twenty-four other thrones and twenty-four

crowned “elders” seated on these thrones (v. 4).

Then John begins to describe various things about God’s throne, which he both sees and hears — “lightnings,” “thunderings,” and “voices” coming out of the throne, and “lamps of fire burning before the throne” (v. 5). And “in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne” John sees four living creatures who “rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”; and these living creatures “give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever” (vv. 6-9).

Then the scene returns to the twenty-four elders, who rise from their thrones, fall down before God, worship Him, cast their crowns before His throne, and express adoration to the One worthy “to receive glory and honor and power” (vv. 10, 11).

If an apex is to be found in the Book of Revelation, aside from Christ’s return in chapter nineteen, the action of these twenty-four elders would have to be considered. Their action — relinquishing their crowns to the One Who originally placed them in the positions which they occupy — is significant beyond degree in relation to the central message of this book.

CROWNS, REGALITY, GOVERNMENT

“Crowns” have to do with *regality*, and *the government of the earth* is in view throughout the Book of Revelation. At this point in the book, the judgment of Christians, with a view to *regality*, will have just occurred; and, with a view to this same *regality*, Christ, following this, is seen as the One about to redeem the forfeited inheritance through taking the seven-sealed

scroll from God's right hand and breaking the seals (ch. 5).

Angels have ruled over the earth since time immemorial — since that time when God established the government of the earth in the beginning. Angels will still be exercising this same rule over the earth following the judgment of Christians, at this point in the book. And angels will continue ruling until Christ and His co-heirs (forming His bride) take the kingdom, following Christ's return to the earth (Heb. 2:5).

Accordingly, neither Christ nor Christians will receive the crowns which they are to wear during the Messianic Era until after Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation. The crown which Christ will wear during this time is presently being worn by Satan, as he continues to exercise power over the earth. And the crowns which Christians will wear in that day are presently being worn by two segments of angels — the angels presently ruling with Satan, and the angels who refused to follow Satan when he sought to exalt his throne.

When Satan sought to exalt his throne — following his being placed over the earth, with a large contingent of angels ruling the earth with him — only one-third of these ruling angels followed Satan, with the other two-thirds refusing to follow him (*cf.* Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:3, 4). And though the angels not following Satan didn't continue ruling with him, they could not immediately relinquish their appointed positions. Rather, they had to retain their positions, remaining crowned, for a time.

A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler retain his crown until the one replacing him is not only on the

scene but ready to ascend the throne. *Only then* can an incumbent ruler relinquish his crown.

(For example, note the account of Saul and David, forming a type. Saul, though disqualified, retained his crown and continued to reign until David was not only present but ready to ascend the throne. Then, Saul's crown was taken, given to David, and David [along with certain faithful men] ascended the throne and reigned in the stead of Saul and those who had ruled with him [I, II Sam.].)

And it will be exactly the same in the antitype. Satan, though disqualified, will retain his crown and continue to reign until Christ is not only present but ready to ascend the throne. Then, Satan's crown will be taken, given to Christ, and Christ [along with certain faithful individuals] will ascend the throne and reign in the stead of Satan and those who had ruled with him [Rev. 19:11-20:6].)

This same established principle must prevail relative to the angels refusing to follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne. They must retain their crowns until those who are to replace them, those who are to wear these crowns, are not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne.

These relinquished crowns though will be worn *only after* Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, overthrows Satan and his angels, and forcibly takes their crowns. *Only then* will Christ be in possession of *all the crowns* which He and His bride are destined to wear as they ascend the throne and rule the earth.

Thus, with the introduction of crowns cast before God's throne in Rev. 4:10, 11, only one group of individuals could possibly be in view (if one remains within context and keeps in mind

the earth's government in both history and prophecy). These twenty-four elders can only represent angelic rulers. *Angels alone* will possess crowns in relation to the government of the earth at this time (as they do during the present time).

(Some Bible students, on the basis of the pronouns used in Rev. 5:9, 10 — “us” and “we” [KJV] — have understood the twenty-four elders to represent redeemed men, not angels. However, the majority of the better Greek manuscripts omit the pronoun in v. 9 and render the pronouns in v. 10 as “them” and “they” [*ref.* ASV, NASB, NIV, Wuest, Weymouth].)

But the matter is really not left to manuscript evidence alone. That the pronouns “them” and “they” are correct is evident from the context. Note that the song in vv. 9, 10 is apparently sung not only by the “twenty-four elders” but also by the “four beasts [‘living creatures’]” as well. Then, other angels join them in vv. 11ff, with all of the angels together voicing additional, related statements.)

And at this point in the book, through the action of the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne, the way will be opened for God to transfer the government of the earth from the hands of angels to the hands of man.

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