

The Inscrutable Question: Angelic Worship: Angels' Crowns Compared with Believers' *Stephanos* Nike Awards, Rev 4:10; 2 Tim 4:7-8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:2-4

24. Among the Nike Awards are **στέφανος / *stephanos*** /, "crowns." Scripture reveals three that are conveyed to the winner believer:

- a. The Crown of Righteousness: The development of capacity righteousness is fulfilled when the believer enters into spiritual maturity. He receives escrow blessings in time and thus has the capacity for escrow blessings in eternity.

2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith.

v 8 - In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day [**the judgment seat of Christ**], and not to me only, but to all winner believers who love His appearing [**rapture of the church**].

- b. The Crown of Life: The crown of life recognizes one's perseverance under pressure from the status quo of spiritual maturity. It stresses the consistent function of virtue love, which is based on personal love for God and resultant unconditional love for all mankind. From virtue love comes maximum production of divine good in the plan of God.

James 1:12 - Happy is the person who perseveres under testing, for once he has passed the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him.

- c. The Crown of Glory: This crown award is limited to certain pastors who faithfully study and communicate doctrine to their assigned flock, many of which advance to spiritual maturity.

1 Peter 5:2 - [CTL] Shepherd the flock of God assigned to you, not unwillingly but voluntarily, not for dishonest gain but with a prepared mind;

v 3 - neither as a despot over God's assigned congregation but rather become the pattern for honorable function to the flock.

v 4 - And when the Shepherd in Chief shall appear [**at the rapture of the church**], you shall receive [**at the Royal Award Ceremonies of the judgment seat of Christ**] the unfading crown of glory.

25. We have taken this time to examine the crown category of the Nike Awards so that we can better understand the character of those angels who worship Christ in:

Revelation 4:10 - And the twenty-four officers of the angelic general staff will fall down before Him Who sits on the throne, and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and they will place their crowns before the throne, saying,

26. As winner-believers in Jesus Christ will be decorated with crowns at the judgment seat of Christ, certain elect angels have already received their crowns at a similar ceremony in eternity past.
27. Why do the angels remove their crowns and place them before the throne of Christ?
28. The crown awards presented to winner believers at the judgment seat of Christ were conveyed in recognition of ultimate achievement in the spiritual life of the Church Age.

29. Some similar achievement occurred among certain elect angels in eternity past for which they were imputed crown awards.
30. Some 24 recipients are mentioned in this verse that subordinated to God's plan to such a degree that they each received a crown.
31. These angels clearly understand that it was only through submission to God's plan for them that they were able to qualify for their crowns.
32. In a similar submission to authority they clearly understand that the crown itself is an expression of the God's grace to them.
33. You cannot give what you do not possess. In worship these angels humbly give what they possess. The crowns given to them by God they willingly place at the base of the Lord's throne.
34. This is a major principle of worship. Giving to God is an humble recognition that all that we have is His and that He is willing to give us everything.

We give our heart so easily to the ruler of this world

When the One who loves us most will give us all.

(Ron Block, "There Is a Reason")

35. These angelic staff officers give to Christ their most precious possession as an expression of their worship.
36. But with grace orientation they completely understand that they still have the Source.
37. All true worship recognizes the Source of all that we possess whether it is spiritual, material, or eternal.
38. Since our relationship with God is eternally secure then anything He gives us is secure.
39. Therefore a principle emerges: the Source of blessing is more important than the blessing.
40. Should we lose the blessing we still have the Source.
41. An attitude of gratitude places the Source ahead of any manifestation of prosperity.
42. Consequently, when we place the Source ahead of the blessing then the blessing can never be distorted, destroyed, or lost.
43. From these twenty-four winner-angels we learn the pattern for passing prosperity testing: as long as the blessing never takes the place of the Source, the blessing will continue to be a blessing.
44. As they bow before Christ and place their crowns at the base of His throne, they sing the following song:

Revelation 4:11 - "O Lord, You are worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power; because You have created all things *ex nihilo* and also because of your sovereign will they existed in eternity past and were created."