

The crown

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I saw a great stadium, full of people. Everything was gold, and there was a throne in the middle which was of the purest gold I had ever seen. It was surrounded by figures dressed in white and gold. Satan came into the Stadium and took his seat on the throne. One of the figures was holding a crown of pure gold. He went forward and placed it on the head of Satan.

Everyone stood up and cheered - except me. A figure came to me and said - "You must stand and cheer." I replied "I am a prophet of the Most High. I have a heart of flint towards your Master and all his works. I am here to testify before my master of what I have seen. I will never stand."

The dark figure writhed in evil and anger. "Trouble will come to you," it said. "No trouble will ever come to me from you or your kind. My Master rules the heaven and the earth. I am leaving now and if any of your kind come even near me I will kill them."

The dark figure was afraid and backed away.

Satan's crown

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:9)

Satan wants to rule and reign. He wants to wear the crown which belongs to the Lord. This position of honour - to be crowned with glory and honour - is one which Satan yearns for. What exactly is he looking for?

*** The crown of Power**

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" (Matthew 4:8-10)

Satan has nothing, yet he offers Jesus "All this" if only Jesus will worship him. If Jesus had surrendered, it would lead to this -

Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do." "Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." (Daniel 3:4-6)

Satan's power corrupts, destroys and binds. The crown of power and authority is corrupted by his touch into one of evil and bondage.

*** The crown of comfort of wealth**

The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" (Luke 1:16-19)

Satan's crown glistens with wealth, comfort and prosperity. It is a sparkling diamond, and so many have accepted this false crown. But it is a dangerous deception. The Church in Laodicea found out the truth about this crown and where it leads - **"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But the truth is this - "You are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."** (Revelation 3:17)

* The crown of self

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people— robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14)

One of the crowns that Satan wants is the crown of selfish desire. Many seem to trust self, as the Pharisee did in the story from Luke. The greatest danger from this crown is seen in the last words – “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified.”

Pride and personal satisfaction are very offensive to the Lord. He is Lord and provides all security. But this crown says - “I am Lord, and I will provide my own security.” Satan loves this crown because it degrades this truth – “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3)

This is exactly what this crown wants - to deny and destroy God and make gods of us. For our own benefit? Of course not - for Satan’s benefit. In depending on self, we are increasing his kingdom. This fact, of course, he keeps well hidden.

* The crown of strength of religion

“We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” (John 8:33)

Here is one of the ugliest crowns of all. Satan wants, above all else, to pollute religion. He wants to plant his crown in the very heart of the church. He does this by making religion a formalised experience, and then gets those who are religious to depend on the structure and the form, not the spirit. This is devastating. It leads to the withdrawal of the Spirit and a crushing formalism which destroys all dissenting voices. Ultimately it leads to this -

“These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” (Isaiah 29:13)

Here is the real sorrow. Those who rise to positions of power appoint others who are like them. True faith is crushed under the weight of the institution.

* The crown of deceit in high places

“Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.” (Luke 22:71)

Some who have positions of leadership are deceitful, thieves, adulterers, sexual predators, domineering dictators and theological deceivers. Such men and women are loved by Satan, and he ensures that they grow strong and powerful. Such leaderships support, even if in a hidden way, the words from the Pharisees - **“Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”**

This statement ignores truth, honesty or any level of fairness, yet it works. The deceit is so well hidden that maybe even those who speak it did not know what they are doing.

Many in our church leaderships - ministers and laity - are deceived and become deceivers. Satan ensures that they stay there because in this way he can pollute and destroy. This vision describes describe them well -

In a distant land, a dark stream began to flow towards Ghana. Some, who did still watch in the heavenly places, saw it coming closer and closer, but did not know what it was. In every place where the stream flowed, bitter trees grew up, and poisoned the land around it. Those who lived close to the bitter trees became dark and hopeless.

One day the stream flowed silently into Ghana. Dark trees began to grow, but the people didn't care. Taking their goods, and their false hopes, they continued to believe that all was well. The warning voices grew silent, and dark times began.

A very dangerous and effective crown.

* Crown of the church

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” (Matthew 4:8-9)

Satan wants to be crowned Lord of the Church, and he begs the Founder of the church to give the crown of the church to him. He must destroy the church. There are many reasons – here are three -

* **The church is the only group who know what he is planning.**

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open..” (Luke 8:17)

If he can get Lordship over the church, then he can hide himself from the world until he gets onto the throne. Then all will see how they have been misled, but it will be too late. Here is the biblical description of his attempt-

But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. (Hebrews 11:35-38)

*** He can mock and humiliate the Lord. "Come down from the cross and save yourself!" (Mark 15:30)**

Once the church is under his rule, he can mock, humiliate and abuse the Lord. There will be no one to stand with Jesus.

*** He can become God himself. "if you will bow down and worship me." (Matthew 4:9)**

No one will be left to deny his access to the crown and the throne. So he wages war against the Lord's people. Here is another vision -

I was immediately surrounded by great darkness. In front of me was a throne, and Arrogance was being crowned. Around the throne were worshippers. I saw their names. Deceit, Filth, Degradation, Bondage, Rape, Pollution, Ugliness, Pride, Anger, Destruction, Incest, Paedophilia, Lying, Despair, Disfigurement, Atheist, False Religion.

They all bowed down and proclaimed "Great spirit of darkness, soon your time will come and their spirit will be broken. You will empty the filth of the cross of its Liar, take your power and reign."

I saw God's people being brought before them, to be humiliated, degraded and killed.

The Great crown

There are many ways of seeing the crown of Satan. But it all leads to one place:

You must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." (Daniel 3:4-6)

The crown of Satan leads to our defeat, our imprisonment and his triumph.

JESUS

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

There is only one who can wear the crown of glory - the one who won it at Calvary. That gave him the authority over all creation, including the satanic kingdom -

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” (Matthew 28:20)

This “crown wearing authority” is the Lord’s even today in the heavenly places. –

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. (Revelation 1:4)

It will become clear to all creation – physical and spiritual at his second coming -

“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:30)

Deny Satan the crown

Jesus has the right to wear the crown, and in his life he broke all of Satan’s claims to the crown. He has denied Satan the crown. Here is what the Lord has broken -

The crown of power

During the storm on the lake, Jesus was able to muzzle the wind and command the sea to be calm. Satan sent the storm to kill Jesus. The power, however, belonged to the Lord.

Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Mark 4:39)

Jesus wears the crown of power.

The crown of provision

Satan claims to be able to provide wealth and comfort. The rich Farmer makes Satan's position clear-

The ground of a certain rich man produced an abundance. So he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, since I have nowhere to store my crops?' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and will build bigger ones, and there I will store up all my grain and my goods. Then I will say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry!"' (Luke 12:16-19)

Selfish and self-centred greed, which led to his spiritual destruction – **"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be required of you. Then who will own what you have accumulated?'"**

Jesus has the power to provide, out of compassion and the awareness of need. Such provision leads to faith, not destruction –

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. (John 6:9-13)

Satan claims to be able to provide. Compassionate providing belongs to Jesus and to Jesus alone.

The crown of security

Satan claims to be able to provide security. But could he do this?

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen." (Acts 12:5-11)

Satan imprisons, shuts down, binds and entraps. He imprisoned Peter but he could not prevent the One who wears the crown from setting him free. Only Jesus can give security.

The crown of the church

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18)

Satan wants to claim the crown of the Church. But the Bible is clear -

The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. (Ps 118:22)
And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church. (Ephesians 1:22)

Jesus is Lord of his bride. There may be much sin and much need of repentance, but the Church belongs to the Lord by his command. Satan has invaded, but we deny him the crown.

THE KING CROWNED

Here is the one who wears the true crown, and how Satan hates it!

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:22-27)

THE BATTLE

This is the battle that God's people are caught up in. The enemy wants his crown and he's making every effort to get it. All that stands between him and his victory is a repentant and spirit filled church which will stand against him, reveal his deceits and exalt the victory of the cross over him.