

How Sweet the Sound

Remembering Great Hymns of the Faith

April 2009 - A Guide for Study and Discussion

Crown Him with Many Crowns

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 Lord of life,
Who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious through 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 pow'r a scepter sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
And all be pray'r and praise:
His reign shall know no end,
And round His pierced 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:
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me:
Thy praise and glory shall not fall
Thro' out eternity.

Text: Matthew Bridges, Godfrey Thring; tune DIADEMATA, George J. Elvey

Study and Discussion Guide for Crown Him with Many Crowns

Who wrote Crown Him with Many Crowns?

This hymn was written by Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring.

Who was Matthew Bridges?

Matthew Bridges was born in England in 1800. He was raised in the Anglican church but converted to Catholicism in 1848. His older brother was the well-known Rev. Charles Bridges.

He published many books of prose and poetry, including a couple of hymn collections. In 1852, he published a small hymn book, *The Passion of Jesus*. This included "Crown Him with Many Crowns," which Bridges titled "Song of the Seraphs." (A seraph is one of the beings above God's throne described in Isaiah 6.)

Bridges died in England in 1894.

Who was Godfrey Thring?

Godfrey Thring was born in England in 1823. His father was an Anglican priest. His family was quite prominent.

Thring was ordained in the Anglican church. He had a special interest in the good of children. He authored many hymns and published several books of poetry and hymns.

He died in England in 1903.

Why was this hymn "written twice"?

Matthew Bridges originally published his hymn in 1852. However, many Anglicans did not approve of some of his stanzas, which they thought contained too much Catholic doctrine. They requested that Godfrey Thring write some additional stanzas to replace those that they did not approve of. He did, and later he rewrote the whole hymn. He published it under the title "Christ Ascended" in 1874, as part of his hymnbook, *Hymns and Sacred Lyrics*.

(In this booklet, stanzas 1, 3, 4 come from Bridges' original hymn. Stanza 2 was written by Godfrey Thring.)

What Scripture passage is this hymn based on?
Revelation 19:12 – “and on his head are many crowns.”

Whose head does that verse speak of?
Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

How should this hymn encourage us?
John wrote the book of Revelation while in exile on the island of Patmos. This persecuted Christian recorded the visions God gave to him so that he could encourage other persecuted Christians in their faith.

Singing about the many ways that Jesus reigns should cause us to do at least three things:

First, we should not rebel against Jesus. He is the King who will overcome all rebellion against him.

Second, we should not fear man. Jesus is the King who will conquer his enemies and ours.

Third, we should hope in Jesus. Jesus is going to return again with many crowns upon his head. Because of his death and resurrection, the victory has already been won. When he appears, all of our suffering and sorrow will cease. We will enjoy him and his reign forever!

Stanza 1

Recite stanza 1.

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.

What is a crown?

A crown is a something worn on the head by rulers, such as kings and queens. It is a symbol of that person's reign, showing power and authority.

What does it mean to “crown him”?

To crown someone means to “recognize officially” or acknowledge something important about someone. In this case, it is to recognize that Jesus reigns and rules.

Why should we “crown Him with many crowns”?

Because Jesus is King over many different things, over everything.

This hymn is about recognizing and celebrating the many different aspects of Jesus' reign as King.

Name some of the things that Jesus reigns over as King.

Jesus reigns over heaven and hell, earth, sky and sea, creation and history, mankind and animals, angels and demons, death and Satan, sickness and suffering, war and peace, the young and the old, and the worst of sinners.

Why is Jesus called “the Lamb upon the throne”?

He is called “the Lamb” because he is the sacrificial Lamb whose shed blood takes away the sin of the world (Revelation 5:6-9; John 1:29).

He is “upon the throne” because he is the King. He is worthy to be the King because he obeyed the Father by shedding his blood to ransom sinners (Revelation 5:9-10, 12, 13).

What does it mean that "the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own"?

An anthem is a song of praise or gladness. The song of heaven praising Jesus "drowns out" every other song. It will be sung when every other anthem stops.

This means that Jesus will out-last and overcome any rival to his throne and all rebellion against his rule.

Why should my soul "awake and sing"?

In light of the Saving Reign of Jesus Christ, the Day of Salvation has come. Since the day has come, sinners should "wake up" from the sleep of sin and submit to King Jesus. We should leave our sin and worship the one who died to save sinners and rose from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:34; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; Revelation 3:2-3)

What does it mean that Jesus "died for thee"?

This speaks of Jesus' crucifixion. The Son, who is fully God, became a man named Jesus and lived a perfect life. He did not deserve to suffer under God the Father's wrath. But he was nailed to a cross where God's wrath was poured out on him in the place of sinners. He was bearing their punishment for them.

The one who believes that Jesus died in his place stirs his heart to worship by telling himself, "Jesus died for you!"

What does it mean that Jesus is the "matchless King through all eternity"?

It means that there is no other King who is like Jesus.

Satan and the Beast both try to be like Jesus, appearing with "crowns" on their heads (Revelation 12:3; 13:1). But their crowns are numbered because their power is limited by God's sovereignty.

Jesus wears "many crowns." They are unnumbered because his power and authority is without end.

There is no king or president or chief or military general who is as wonderful and powerful as Jesus.

Stanza 2

Recite stanza 2.

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.

Why is Jesus "the Lord of life"?

He is the Lord of life because he created all life and gives life to everything that lives (John 1:3-4; Colossians 1:16-18; Hebrews 1:2).

He is also the Lord of life because he redeems his people and gives them new life, eternal life (John 6:35-40; 10:10).

What is "the grave"?

The "grave" is the place where people bury their dead. It is symbolic of death. We die because "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23). "The grave" reminds us that the world is under a curse because of sin.

How is Jesus' resurrection a "triumph" and a "victory" over the grave?

Death only has power as the penalty for sin. If sin is removed, then death is conquered. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that he satisfied God's wrath as an acceptable sacrifice.

God gives that victory to believers through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:58).

What does it mean that Jesus "died and rose on high"?

After Jesus died, he rose from the dead on the third day. After spending some time on earth, he ascended into heaven, where he sits at the Father's right hand in power and glory.

How does Jesus' death bring eternal life?

His death brings eternal life by satisfying God's wrath. With God's wrath removed, we are the recipients of only his favor, and heirs of eternal life with Jesus.

What does it mean that Jesus "lives that death may die"?
His resurrection from the dead guarantees the resurrection of his people. In their resurrection from the dead, King Jesus will destroy death, putting death to death (1 Corinthians 15:20-26; Revelation 20:14).

Stanza 3

Recite stanza 3.

Crown Him the Lord of peace,
Whose power a scepter sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
And all be pray'r and praise:
His reign shall know no end,
And round His pierced feet
Fair flows of paradise extend
Their fragrance ever sweet.

What is peace?

In the Bible, peace is when God's authority and power rule his relations with the world. Peace comes to those who submit themselves to God's reign in King Jesus.

Is there world peace now? Why not?

No, there is not world peace now because Satan and sinners rebel against God's authority and power.

What is a scepter?

A scepter is a staff held by a king to represent his authority.

What scepter does Jesus' power sway?

The Bible says that Jesus will rule the nations with a scepter of iron (Psalm 2:7-9; Revelation 19:15). That means he shall completely destroy his enemies.

What does "from pole to pole" mean?

It means that Jesus shall reign over all the earth—from the north pole to the south pole. Jesus will reign over everything, even a New Heavens and a New Earth (Revelation 20: 21:1-4).

What does it mean "that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise"?

It means that under his final reign there will be no more rebellion against his rule. It means that people will not be mean to one another. It means that every last result of sin and the curse will be removed (Revelations 21:4). Without war, sickness, persecution and death, Jesus' people are free to worship him forever (Revelation 22:3).

How long shall Jesus reign this way?

"His reign shall know no end"—he will reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:5).

What does it mean that "round His pierced feet fair flowers of paradise extend"?

"Flowers of paradise" remind us of the garden-paradise that God created for man to live in (Genesis 2:8-9). That garden-paradise was lost in the Fall (Genesis 3:23).

The New Heavens and the New Earth will be like the Garden of Eden, only much, much better! God's people will drink and eat from the river of the water of life and the tree of life (Revelation 22:1-2).

Stanza 4

Recite stanza 4.

Crown Him the Lord of love;
Behold His hands and side,
Those [Rich] wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified:
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me:
Thy praise and glory shall not fail
Thro'out eternity.

What is love?

Love is giving of yourself to help other people enjoy who God is.

What is the greatest demonstration of love ever shown?

The greatest act of love was Jesus dying on the cross for the sins of his people (John 15:13; Romans 5:6-8). He did that so they could be forgiven and enjoy God forever.

How can we see this act, when Jesus died almost 2000

years ago?

We will see that act of love in his "glorified wounds." After his resurrection, Jesus showed his disciples his wounds (John 20:27). In heaven, Jesus is "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6). This probably means that believers will see Jesus' wounds in heaven, as an eternal reminder of his great love for them.

What does it mean to "hail" someone?

It means to greet someone with enthusiastic approval.

Why should we "hail" Jesus?

Believers should celebrate the coming of Jesus because he died for their sin and live that death may die!

What does it mean that his "praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity"?

It means that there will never come a time when Jesus is not worshipped.