**These crowns are relinquished to God — with a view to man ruling in the kingdom — so that God can appoint those who had previously been shown qualified at events pertaining to the judgment seat [**[**Revelation 1-3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-3&t=NKJV)**] to positions of power and authority; and those whom God appoints will wear these crowns in Christ’s kingdom.**

**Crowns Cast before What? By Who? Why? When?**

**By Arlen L. Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

**Crowns before the Throne**

Who Will Cast the Crowns?

Why Will These Crowns be Cast?

When Will These Crowns be Cast?

*After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice that I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this* [‘after these things’].

*Immediately I was* [‘I became’] *in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.*

*Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.*

*the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.* ([Revelation 4:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1-2&t=NKJV), [4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.4&t=NKJV), [10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV))

Immediately following events pertaining to the judgment seat, attention is again called to that which is previously seen in [Revelation 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.10&t=NKJV) — 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 which is seen in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV)).

But, with events pertaining to the judgment seat already having been dealt with (in chapters two and three, viewed from the perspective of chapter one), John is now shown subsequent events. In this chapter, John is shown events that will occur immediately following those pertaining to the judgment seat and the revelation of the bride; and these subsequent events will occur preceding the beginning of the Tribulation, as the first seal of the scroll is broken ([Revelation 6:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6.1ff&t=NKJV)).

(Note that Revelation chapters two and three present a dual aspect of teachings surrounding the Church. These two chapters present:

1) A history of the Church throughout the dispensation.

2) The Church in Christ’s presence at the end of the dispensation, being judged.

The description of Christ seen in chapter one is that of *a Judge*, not that of a Priest [shown through the girdle about the breasts rather than the waist, along with the description in general ([Revelation 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.13&t=NKJV))]. And *the complete Church* is seen in His presence at this time [*all seven churches, showing completeness, showing all Christians being present at this time* ([Revelation 1:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.20&t=NKJV))].

One aspect of that which is seen in chapters two and three depicts this future judgment of Christians. In each of the seven letters [seven epistles] to the churches, *works*, with a view to *overcoming*, are seen. And, as revealed elsewhere in Scripture, *works* and *overcoming* cover the complete scope of that which will be seen at the judgment seat. A Christian’s “works” will be dealt with, showing whether the Christian has overcome or has been overcome [[1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV)].)

**The Heavenly Scene**

Immediately after attention has been called to the same event seen in [Revelation 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.10&t=NKJV) ([Revelation 4:1-2a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1-2a&t=NKJV)), John, rather than seeing a judicial scene (as in chapter one), now sees a rainbow encircled throne, with God seated on the throne ([Revelation 4:2-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.2-3&t=NKJV) [2b]). And surrounding this throne, John sees twenty-four other thrones and twenty-four crowned “elders” seated on these thrones ([Revelation 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.4&t=NKJV)).

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*” ([Revelation 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.5&t=NKJV)). And “*in the midst of the throne, and around the throne*” John sees four living creatures who “*do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!*’”; and these living creatures “*give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever*” ([Revelation 4:6-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.6-9&t=NKJV)).

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 powe*r” ([Revelation 4:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV)).

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 that 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 by taking the seven-sealed scroll from His Father’s right hand ([Revelation 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5&t=NKJV)).

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 at this point in the book ([Revelation 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4&t=NKJV); [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5&t=NKJV)), and angels will continue ruling until Christ and His co-heirs (forming His bride) take the kingdom, following Christ’s return to the earth ([Hebrews 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.5&t=NKJV)).

Accordingly, neither Christ nor Christians will receive the crowns that they are to wear during the Messianic Era until after Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

The crown that Christ will wear at this time is presently being worn by Satan, as he continues to exercise power over the earth. And the crowns that 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.* [Isaiah 14:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.12-14&t=NKJV); [Matthew 25:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV); [Revelation 12:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.3-4&t=NKJV)). 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 [1 & 2 Samuel].

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 [[Revelation 19:11-20:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11-20.6&t=NKJV)].)

This same established principle must prevail relative to the angels refusing to follow Satan in his attempt to elevate 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 that 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 [Revelation 4:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV), 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 [Revelation 5:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.9-10&t=NKJV) — “us” and “we” [KJV] — have understood the twenty-four elders to represent redeemed men, not angels. However, the majority of the better Greek manuscripts render the pronouns in [Revelation 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.10&t=NKJV) as “them” and “they” *[ref.* ASV, NASB, NIV, Wuest, Weymouth], giving rise to the thought that the pronoun “us” in [Revelation 5:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.9&t=NKJV) is probably a scribal insertion, being spurious [*ref*. Alford, Lenski].

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 [Revelation 5:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.9-10&t=NKJV) 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 [Revelation 5:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.11ff&t=NKJV), with all of the angels together voicing additional, related statements.)

And at this point in the book, by and 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.

These crowns cast before God’s throne, as previously seen, can only have to do with *the government of the earth*. And, at this point in the book, they can be worn by *angels alone.*

*The Son* will not yet have taken the kingdom, though the Father will have previously delivered it into His hands (*cf.* [Daniel 7:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.13-14&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.15&t=NKJV); [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV); [19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)).

These crowns are relinquished to God — with a view to man ruling in the kingdom — so that God can appoint those who had previously been shown qualified at events pertaining to the judgment seat [[Revelation 1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-3&t=NKJV)] to positions of power and authority; and those whom God appoints will wear these crowns in Christ’s kingdom.

These crowns are cast before God’s throne (*cf.* [Revelation 4:1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1-4&t=NKJV); [5:1-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.1-7&t=NKJV)) because *the Father alone* is the One who places and/or removes rulers in His kingdom ([Daniel 4:17-37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.17-37&t=NKJV); [5:18-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+5.18-21&t=NKJV)). *He alone* is the One who placed those represented by the twenty-four elders in the positions that they occupied; and *He alone* is the One who will place individuals in particular positions in the kingdom of Christ [[Matthew 20:20-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+20.20-23&t=NKJV)].

The transfer of the government of the earth, from the hands of angels to the hands of man, in reality, is what the first nineteen chapters of the book of Revelation are about; and as well, this is what the whole of Scripture preceding these nineteen chapters is also about. In this respect, these twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne forms a key event that one must grasp if he would properly understand the book of Revelation and Scripture as a whole.

Christ and His bride, in that coming day, will rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels. And, in the process of ruling in this manner, they will wear *all the crowns* worn by Satan and his angels prior to his fall.

**Action of the Elders**

Thus, that which is depicted through the action of the twenty-four elders in [Revelation 4:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV) is contextually self-explanatory. This has to do with the government of the earth, it occurs at a time following events surrounding the judgment seat but preceding Christ taking the seven-sealed scroll from His Father’s right hand and subsequently breaking the seals, and it occurs at a time when Satan’s reign is about to be brought to a close.

After events in Revelation chapters one through three have come to pass, *for the first time in man’s history*, the person (the bride) who is to rule with the One to replace Satan (Christ) will have been made known and shown forth. And events in the chapter four reflect that fact.

Only one thing could possibly be in view at this point in the book, for the bride will not only have been made known but will be ready for events pertaining to the transfer of power to begin. The twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne can only depict the angels who did not go along with Satan in his rebellion relinquishing their crowns, with a view to those comprising the bride wearing these crowns during the Messianic Era.

But the crowns worn by Satan and those angels presently ruling with him are another matter. These crowns will have to be taken from Satan and his angels by force when Christ returns to overthrow Gentile world power at the end of the Tribulation (a power exercised during “Man’s Day” under Satan and his angels [[Daniel 10:13-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+10.13-20&t=NKJV)]).

(The fact that angels represented by the twenty-four elders are not presently ruling with Satan can be shown not only by their present position — in God’s presence, in heaven — but by the Greek word that is used for the type of crown that they are seen wearing.

There are two words in the Greek text for “crown” — *stephanos*, and *diadema*.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, with *regality* in view, one major distinction stands out concerning how these two words are used. *Diadema* refers to the type of crown worn by a monarch, one presently exercising regal power. *Stephanos*, on the other hand, is used in an opposite sense. It is used to show someone crowned but not presently exercising regal power.

For example, the crown seen on Christ’s head in [Revelation 14:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+14.14&t=NKJV), preceding His reign, is referred to by the word *stephanos* in the Greek text. A crown on Christ’s head at this time could only anticipate His impending reign — the same as the crown on the woman’s head in [Revelation 12:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.1&t=NKJV) (also referred to by the word *stephanos*), with the woman representing Israel, God’s firstborn son, about to exercise the rights of primogeniture, as Christ, God’s firstborn Son, is about to exercise these same rights as well.

Then, when Christ returns to the earth to take the kingdom, He will have many crowns upon His head; and the Greek text uses *diadema* rather than *stephanos* to refer to these crowns, for Christ will be returning as “*King of kings, and Lord of lords*” [[Revelation 19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.12&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.16&t=NKJV)].

The twenty-four elders in chapter four cast crowns referred to as *stephanos* before the throne, indicating that, though crowned, these elders were not exercising regal positions. And the many crowns that Christ will have on His head at the time of His return are undoubtedly these same crowns ([Revelation 19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.12&t=NKJV)). But, anticipating that day when Christ reigns, the book of Revelation uses the word *diadema* to refer to these crowns, for Christ will be exercising a *regal position*, with Satan about to be overthrown.

The crowns on Christ’s head at this time though will not be worn by Christ when He rules the earth, for He is to wear the crown presently worn by Satan [the incumbent ruler] in that day. Rather, these crowns will be given to those forming the bride [whom the Father will previously have appointed to various positions of power and authority with His Son]; and this will occur following that time when the remainder of the crowns having to do with the earth’s government are forcibly taken from Satan and his angels.)

**Twenty-Four, Thirty-Six**

The identity of *the twenty-four elders* is shown not only by their actions and the place in which this occurs in the book but also by their number. Comparing Revelation chapters four and twelve ([Revelation 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.4&t=NKJV), [10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV); [12:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.3-4&t=NKJV)), it appears evident that the government of the earth — originally established by God prior to Satan’s fall — was representatively shown by *three sets of twelve, thirty-six crowned rulers*. “Three” is the number of *divine perfection*, and “twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*.

Those angels who did not follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne would be represented by the twenty-four elders — *two sets of twelve, showing two-thirds of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan*. And the angels who did go along with Satan, presently ruling with him, would be represented by *a third set of twelve, showing the other one-third of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan* ([Revelation 12:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.3-4&t=NKJV)).

In this respect, these three representative sets of twelve would show *divine perfection in the earth’s government*. And also in this respect, this same perfection in the structure of the earth’s government has not existed *since Satan’s attempt to exalt his throne.*

But, this structured perfection will one day again exist in the earth’s government. When Christ and His bride ascend the throne together, crowns worn by those represented by all three sets of twelve will be brought together again. Then, *divine perfection* will once again exist in the government of the one province in God’s universe where imperfection has existed for millennia.