**For the next highest level of rule (the second level), two more crowns are added, making a total of three crowns that will be worn by those of “The Faithful”. These are those that will reign over much. These two added crowns are THE INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN and also THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**The Ranks Of The Crowns
By Gary Whipple of** [**Beyond the Rapture**](http://www.bibleone.net/BeyondtheRapture.pdf)

It is clear that those who will rule and reign with Jesus Christ in His coming kingdom will wear the “stephanos crowns” that were won at the Judgment Seat of Christ. However, it is not absolutely clear which crowns will be awarded in accordance to the ranks of rule. The following is this writer’s view of the order of awards.

**The Third Level of Rule**

The CROWN OF LIFE will be given to those ruling from the third level, over the cities of the millennial earth, *i.e.* the wedding guests. The name of this crown apparently indicates the saving of the soul and is awarded specifically for two reasons.

First, for the believer being “faithful to the Lord unto death” in the face of the trials and tribulations (sins that affect the soul of man) ([Revelation 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.10&t=NKJV)).

Secondly, for “enduring temptation” (sins that affect the spirit of man), and for “loving Christ” ([James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV)). Those who win this crown, and only this crown, will have a limited knowledge of the Word of God. However, they will be faithful to the Lord, for what they know, even unto the death, witnesses to all, that they love Him. This crown then, by its very title, suggests that all who obtain it will have their souls saved.

**The Second Level of Rule**

For the next highest level of rule (the second level), two more crowns are added, making a total of three crowns that will be worn by those of “The Faithful”. These are those that will reign over much. These two added crowns are THE INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN and also THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN is one of the crowns given for running the race and finishing the course. But unlike the “Crown of Life,” it is connected to the body and not to the soul and spirit ([1 Corinthians 9:25-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.25-27&t=NKJV)). Thus when a believer fights a good fight and finishes the course (overcomes sin that affects body, soul, and spirit), he will have won the CROWN OF LIFE and the INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN.

Then, in order to be awarded the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which is even a higher award in the second level, he must have gained and applied the wisdom that points to the kingdom truths. Here, he must not only “fight a good fight” and “finish his course,” but he must also “keep the faith” For it is the keeping, or guarding of this faith which wins this CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ([2 Timothy 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7-8&t=NKJV)). What kind of faith does he guard? It is not the common faith that is connected to the cross, for that salvation cannot be lost, but rather, the faith that is connected to the rewards, which can be lost. That faith which speaks of Christ’s coming kingdom and produces good works through those that hope in Him. We see this in [2 Timothy 4:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.8&t=NKJV), when the apostle says that he would be awarded this higher crown on the basis of “loving His appearing” (His visible coming to set up His kingdom). Only those who love His appearing will have wisdom of the kingdom and will be producing righteous works (note: the word “righteousness” which is a part of the title of this crown, meaning the righteous works of the saints). This love of His appearing then, in turn, produces a hope to rule and reign with Him.

[2 Timothy 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7-8&t=NKJV), seems to be saying that one cannot obtain the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS without first winning the CROWN OF LIFE and the INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN. We see this in the construction of [2 Timothy 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7&t=NKJV), which says,

*“I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”*

Here, the one expression “I have fought a good fight...”belongs to the winning of the INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN. We see this in [1 Corinthians 9:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.26-27&t=NKJV), where Paul informed us that he is in a real fight, *i.e.* doesn’t beat the air (shadow box). He was in a real fight to keep his body under control from sins of the flesh. Also the race that he was running was not uncertain, but real. Thus, as a spiritual athlete, he constantly disciplined his body in order to master it.

Then, in this same [2 Timothy 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7&t=NKJV), Paul uses another expression *“...I have finished my course*...” This expression belongs to the CROWN OF LIFE for finishing life’s course (being faithful unto death) through the trials of temptation (sins affecting the spirit of man) and tribulation (sins affecting the soul of man) and for loving Christ. Notice here, that he did not use the expression “loving his appearing,” for that is the qualification for a higher crown.

Finally, Paul exclaimed that he had kept “...the faith,” not that he was just faithful. This expression tells us that he did not fall away (apostate) from “the faith” (the kingdom truths) which is connected to Christ’s appearing and his reward.

Furthermore, he tells us in [2 Timothy 4:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.8&t=NKJV), that he was to receive the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS and not only to him, but to anyone who could qualify (love His appearing).

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