

Crown Him with Many Crowns



1 Crown him with ma - ny crowns, the Lamb up - on his throne.
 2 Crown him the Lord of life, who tri - umphed o'er the grave,
 3 Crown him the Lord of love; be - hold his hands and side,
 4 Crown him the Lord of years, the po - ten - tate of time,

Hark! how the heaven - ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own.
 and rose vic - to - rious in the strife for those he came to save;
 rich wounds, yet vi - si - ble a - bove, in beau - ty glo - ri - fied;
 cre - a - tor of the rol - ling spheres, in - ef - fa - bly su - blime.

A - wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
 his glo - ries now we sing who died and rose on high,
 no an - gel in the sky can ful - ly bear that sight,
 All hail, Re - dee - mer, hail! for thou hast died for me;

and hail him as thy match - less king through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 who died e - ter - nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
 but down - ward bends each bur - ning eye at my - ste - ries so bright.
 thy praise shall ne - ver, ne - ver fail through - out e - ter - ni - ty.

Crown Him With Many Crowns as we know it today comes from two attempts to capture the image of Jesus crowned with “many diadems” (Rev. 19:12).

In 1851, British-Canadian author Matthew Bridges wrote “Song of the Seraphs” based on that very passage of Scripture. From one image, Bridges saw Jesus as deserving of myriad titles and honors like the many crowns upon his head: Lamb upon the Throne, Incarnate Son of the Virgin, Glorified Suffering Savior, Sovereign Prince of Peace, Creator of the Cosmos, Truly God. His original six verses capture these titles of Jesus beautifully.

However, as the hymn grew in prominence, many saw room for improvement. Bridges was involved in a church movement called the Tractarian (or Oxford) Movement. It began as an attempt to reform Anglican Protestantism with some elements of Catholic church liturgy and doctrine. Some of its aims were honorable, as in the enrichment of church worship and the push to separate church and state. But other efforts leaned so heavily into certain practices and doctrine that it led to several prominent Anglicans to convert to Catholicism, including Bridges. Thus, from a Protestant perspective, Bridges’ lyrics seemed to be missing something.

Enter Anglican pastor Godfrey Thring, who published his own version of “Crown Him With Many Crowns” and filled in the gaps he saw in the original. Rather than focus on Jesus as son of the Virgin Mary, he showed Jesus as the fully God and fully Man, perfectly emphatic to man’s temptations and weakness. Rather than focus his glorified wounds which “no angel in the sky” can fathom, he showed the cross and resurrection as the sure victory for his church, “those he came to save.”

Today, churches sing a version that combines the two authors’ attempts, with Bridges’ vision of King Jesus and Thring’s reminder of why he is worthy of his many crowns.

Scripture to consider:

2 Samuel 7	John 1	Hebrews 2
Psalms 2	John 19	Revelation 5
Psalms 72	Philippians 2	Revelation 19

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