

1 Thessalonians 2:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Analysis

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?—tis gar hēmōn elpis ē chara ē stephanos kauchēseōs ē ouchi kai hymeis emprosthen tou Kyriou hēmōn Iēsou en tē autou parousia (τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ; 'For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting? Is it not even you before our Lord Jesus at his coming?'). Stephanos (στέφανος) is the victor's wreath, not royal diadema—the reward for faithful service.

At his coming (parousia, παρουσία)—first explicit mention of Christ's return in Paul's letters, a theme dominating 1 Thessalonians (2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23). Parousia meant 'presence' or 'arrival' (especially of royalty or military commanders); Paul applies it to Christ's triumphant return. The Thessalonians themselves are Paul's 'crown'—successful ministry produces spiritual children who will stand before Christ at His return. This future orientation transforms present suffering: what matters isn't comfort now but fruit then, when Christ evaluates ministry (1 Cor 3:12-15; 2 Cor 5:10).

Historical Context

Athletic imagery resonated in Greco-Roman culture, where victorious athletes received laurel wreaths (stephanos) and public honor. Paul transforms this

imagery: the true victory wreath isn't personal achievement but fruitful ministry producing believers who persevere to Christ's return. The emphasis on parousia reflects early Christian expectation of Christ's imminent return, though Paul doesn't date-set (5:1-3). This hope sustained perseverance—present suffering was temporary; coming glory and reunion with Christ were permanent.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does viewing spiritual children as your 'crown of rejoicing' at Christ's coming change your approach to discipleship and evangelism?
2. What evidence demonstrates that your present ministry priorities are oriented toward fruit at Christ's return rather than comfort or recognition now?
3. How does expectation of Christ's *parousia* (coming) affect your evaluation of present suffering, sacrifice, and service?

Interlinear Text

τίς	γὰρ	ἡμῶν	ἐλπίς	ἢ	χαρὰ	ἢ	στέφανος	καυχήσεως
what	For	is our	hope	or	joy	or	crown	of rejoicing
G5101	G1063	G2257	G1680	G2228	G5479	G2228	G4735	G2746
ἢ	οὐχὶ	καὶ	ὕμεῖς	ἔμπροσθεν	τοῦ	κυρίου	ἡμῶν	Ἰησοῦ
or	Are not	even	ye	in the presence	G3588	Lord	is our	Jesus
G2228	G3780	G2532	G5210	G1715		G2962	G2257	G2424
Χριστοῦ	ἐν	τῇ	αὐτοῦ	παρουσίᾳ				
Christ	at	G3588	his	coming				
G5547	G1722		G846	G3952				

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 4:1 (References Lord): Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (References Jesus): To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

2 Corinthians 1:14 (References Jesus): As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (References Jesus): And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:16 (References Christ): Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:23 (References Christ): But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Matthew 16:27 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

1 John 2:28 (Parallel theme): And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Revelation 1:7 (Parallel theme): Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 22:12 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

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