

Title: **THREE CHRISTIAN EMBLEMS**

(or *The Three Phases of the Christian Life*)

Text: **Philippians 2:5-11**

Intro: Briefly discuss religious and national symbols. Explain the Christian flag. Instead of just one main symbol—the cross, I propose three, and these are: the YOKE, CROSS and CROWN. Let us examine each of these word pictures and learn some insightful lessons from their spiritual meanings.

I. **Phase #1 – THE YOKE** (Matt. 11:28-30) – **The Symbol of Servitude and Duty**

- A. (59X mentioned). Explain what a yoke is. See **Jer. 27:12; I Tim. 6:1**
- B. The yoke is what separates real disciples from mere believers or admirers of Jesus Christ.
- C. We are privileged partners and co-laborers in the service and ministry of the Lord (**Phil. 4:3**).
- D. After God gets the new Christian yoked up and is already rendering good service with the blessing of God upon him, God begins to deal with him on other lines than merely serving Him; for that is not the end of the program though some may think it is. That is, however, just Phase-1 of the Christian life!
- E. Some Christians think that if they just serve Christ till the trumpet blows at the Rapture they have already done God's will. However, that is just the beginning!

II. **Phase #2 – THE CROSS** (Luke 9:23; 14:27) – **The Symbol of Suffering and Death**

- A. (28X mentioned in NT only). Expound what a cross is from these verses: **Phil. 1:29; II Tim. 3:12; I Tim. 4:10; Phil. 2:8; 3:10; Rom. 8:13; Col 3:5**.
- B. Question: Now why do we suffer in our service? Answer: Simply because it is a part and parcel of our course. Any Christian who thinks suffering is not on God's program has a mistaken perception.
- C. Question: Why do the righteous suffer? Answer: Suffering keeps us balanced, humble and dependent

upon God's grace! Cf. Paul's thorn in the flesh (**II Cor. 12:7-10**).

- D. **Psalm 119:71** – Afflictions teach us. They are a form of training in spiritual discipline.

III. **Phase #3 – THE CROWN** (**Rev. 3:11**) – **The Symbol of Success and Dominion**

- A. (66X mentioned). Explain what a crown is. There are at least 5 crowns at the Judgment Seat of Christ: incorruptible (**I Cor. 9:25**); rejoicing (**I Thess. 2:19**); righteousness (**II Tim. 4:8**); life (**Jas. 1:12**); glory (**I Pet. 5:4**). Now what are these crowns for? See **Rev. 4:10-11**.
- B. **Col. 3:24; Rom. 8: 17-18; II Tim. 2:12-13**
- C. The sufferings, persecutions, hardness, afflictions, etc. you endure for Christ at the present are proof positive that in the future you will wear a crown and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ (**Rev. 5:10; 20:6**).
- D. Always remember, NO YOKE, NO CROSS.....NO CROSS, NO CROWN.....NO CROWN, NO GLORY!

CONCLUSION: Friend, consider carefully what you have learned today: (1) Eternal matters weigh considerably more than earthly matters; (2) In reality, what you cannot see is as certain as what you can see; (3) Your choice right now determines your eternal destiny. Choose Christ and His ways; this will bring you blessing and happiness. Refuse Christ, and you will miss God's favor and joy.

Make your choice...Christ offers you His yoke, His cross, His crown. The devil can give you wealth, pleasure, and a curse. If you choose the crown, you must content yourself to submit to the cross and the yoke which are all linked to each other. So what do you say? Will you yield yourself as a servant of Christ and in this way make your crown certain? Or maybe the issue is not even service and sacrifice yet but rather salvation in Christ? If so, then now is a good time to seek the Lord for pardon and salvation.