

THE CROWN THAT IS “LAID UP”

2Tim.4:6-8

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Our text speaks of a crown that is “laid up” for certain people.
 - a. “Laid up” is from APOKEIMAI, meaning, “to be laid up, or laid away,” or “reserved.”
 - (1) “Is used of money in a napkin, Lk.19:20.”
 - (2) “In Heb.9:27, (“appointed”, KJV; “laid up for”, RV, marg.), where is said of physical death and the judgment following.”
 - (3) “Metaphorically, of a hope, Col.1:5. – W.E. Vine, Vol.,I, 69; Vol. II, 320.
2. Our text identifies this “laid up” crown by one term, while other texts identify it by other terms.
3. Our text tells us who shall dispense this “laid up” crown, when it shall be done, and the conditions on which it shall be done.
4. In this lesson we shall discuss this “laid up” crown by developing these points revealed in our text.

II. DISCUSSION

A. TERMS BY WHICH THIS “LAID UP” CROWN IS IDENTIFIED.

1. A “crown of righteousness,” 2Tim.4:8.
2. An “incorruptible crown,” 1Cor.9:25.
3. The “crown of life,” Jas.1:12; Rev.2:10.
4. A “crown of glory,” 1Pet.5:4.

B. HOW THIS “LAID UP” CROWN IS MORE FULLY IDENTIFIED OR DESCRIBED.

1. Jas.1:12, “he shall receive the crown of life”
 - a. Lit., the life crown, the crown which consists of eternal life. Cf. Mk.10:30; Tit.1:12; 1Jno.224,25; Rev.2:10.
2. According to 1Cor.9:25 it’s an “incorruptible crown”
 - a. It is not a crown of pine or olive leaves or even of silver or gold, or a crown which withers, fades or tarnishes.
 - b. It’s an incorruptible crown which will never wither, tarnish, or perish.
3. According to 1Pet.5:4 it’s a “crown of glory that fadeth not away”
 - a. It’s a “glorious crown that fadeth not away”
 - b. Comparing 1Pet.1:3-5, which speaks of an inheritance “that fadeth not away” thus identifying it with this “laid up” crown, we learn that by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we have been begotten:

- (1) “Unto a living hope”
 - (a) It’s not a cold, dead, and lifeless hope – but “a living hope”.
 - (b) It’s a hope that has vital power within itself and exacts the same upon the soul – it is active, powerful, vibrant! Cf. Rom.8:24,25; Heb.6:18-20.
 - (1) Tit.1:2: “in hope of eternal life”; he lived in hope of it.
 - (2) That hope is “laid up for you in heaven” according to Col.1:5, which also identifies it with this inheritance and this “laid up” crown.
- (2) “Unto an inheritance incorruptible”
 - (a) It’s an inheritance:
 - (1) Which is not liable to corruption or decay.
 - (2) Which is immortal, imperishable, undying, enduring, and thus not affected by the lapse of ages. Cf. Mt.6:19,20; 1Pet.1:23; 2Cor.4:18; 1Cor.15:51-54.
 - (b) On earth we soon part with our mansions and earthly, temporal rewards, however beautiful (or ugly) or valuable they may be.
 - (c) Not so with our heavenly, incorruptible inheritance or this crown of glory.
- (3) “Unto an inheritance...undefiled”
 - (a) Our inheritance by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead – this glorious crown –
 - (1) Is unstained, unsoiled; therefore, pure and chaste. Cf. Heb.7:26, of Christ our High Priest.
 - (2) Will never be defiled, or soiled, deformed, debased or impaired.
 - (3) Will be eternally “pure”.
- (4) “Unto an inheritance...that fadeth not away”
 - (a) “That fadeth not away” is the symbol of perpetuity and immortality.
 - (b) Our inheritance by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the death:
 - (1) Does not fade or wither, or deteriorate, nor will passing ages render it less desirable or attractive.

(2) Not only lasts on and on for eternity, but never loses its original beauty, luster, brightness, and freshness.

(3) Cannot be touched by decay and corruption.

C. WHERE IS THIS CROWN “LAID UP”? AND WHEN RECEIVED?

1. 1Pet.1:3,4 reveals that the inheritance we have through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is not only “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away”, but is also “reserved in heaven for you.”
 - a. While here in 1Pet.1:3,4 he says “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto an inheritance...that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.”
 - b. In 1Pet.5:4 he says, “ye shall receive a crown of glory (a glorious crown) that fadeth not away.”
 - c. Obviously, in both texts he is discussing and describing the same eternal reward, only under different terms.
 - d. Therefore, this crown we are to receive is “laid up” or “reserved in heaven” for us.
 - e. Cf. Heb.10:34.
2. Again, in 2Cor.5:1, the apostle says, “We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Cf. Heb.11:9,10.
 - a. In 2Tim.4:8 he says “a crown of righteousness” awaited him as his eternal reward.
 - b. Is he not referring to the same thing in both texts, only under different terms?
 - c. Therefore, this “laid up” crown is laid up in heaven.
3. Col.1:5 says our hope is “laid up” (treasured) in heaven” for us. Cf. Heb.6:18-20.
4. Phil.3:20,21 declares that our eternal “citizenship is in heaven,” where our crown, our citizenship, our building of God, and our hope are all laid up or reserved for us.
5. 2Tim.4:8 says, “which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give...at that day”, i.e., the day of “his appearing,” or his 2nd Coming. Cf. 2Th.1:6-10; 2Pet.3:9-12; Heb.9:27,28.
6. 1Pet.1:5 says it is a “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”.Cf. v.9.
 - a. This is not the salvation of Mk.16:15,16, Ac.2:36-38; 22:16.
 - b. It’s the salvation of 2Pet.1:5-11; cf. Rom.8:16-18; Tit.1:2; Jas.1:12.
7. “Reserved in heaven”
 - a. “Reserved” indicates “to keep, guard, preserve, to keep in watchful custody, to reserve with a happy issue.

- b. Is “reserved in heaven,” not “laid up” here on earth, as some claim.
 - (1) Hence, it is not available in this life.
 - (2) It is not a promise the enjoyment of which will be on earth.
 - (3) The saint’s future abode is to be in heaven.
 - (4) Eternal life – the inheritance of the people of God, is not a present possession, but a promise, the realization of which must await our entrance into the world to come, Mk.10:30; Tit.1:2; 1Jno.2:24,25; Rom.8:24,25.

D. FOR WHOM AND ON WHAT CONDITIONS IS THIS CROWN “LAID UP” ?

- 1. 2Tim.4:8 says it is “laid up”
 - a. For Paul on the condition of his faithful service to the Lord, vv.6-8a.
 - (1) It was “laid up” for him when this life was over. Therefore, this life would not be the end of Paul’s life, nor the time when he would wear this crown.
 - (2) This crown is the victory crown for the faithful. Cf. 1Jno.5:4,5 1Cor.15:57.
 - (3) It is said to be “a crown of righteousness”-- the crown that belongs to the righteous, and to no others.
 - (4) It is God’s gracious reward for a life of obedient faith lived here on the earth in the flesh, such as Paul had lived, vv.6,7.
 - (5) He is under an unjust sentence of death in a human court by an unjust human judge in Rome under Nero, the Roman Emperor. But by faith he “knows” there awaits him the righteous reward of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who has justified him, declared him righteous, guiltless, thus fitted for heaven. Cf. Col.1:12.
 - b. For all others who love the Lord’s appearing, i.e., all those who by faith look forward to it with joyful anticipation. Cf. 1Th.1:9,10; Tit.2:11-14; Heb.9:27,28; 1Jno.3:2,3.
- 2. Jas.1:12 lays down two conditions in identifying those to whom the Lord has promised “the crown of life”.
 - a. “The man that endureth temptation” and “them that love him”.
 - b. Again it is a promise, not a present possession: “he *shall* receive” – when he hath “endured temptation”, and “when he has been tried”.
 - c. To be rewarded the believer (the receiver of the “crown of life”) must not only have been “proved” (i.e., “endured temptation”) but also have been “approved” (i.e., “tried”) as having shown himself genuine in faith, as one by faith loving the Lord.
 - (1) Lit., to those loving him.

- (2) Not those who once loved him.
 - (3) But those who now, who continue, to love him.
 - (4) Cf. 1Jno.5:3; 1Jno.2:3-5; Jno.14:15,21,23,24.
 - d. He is the one successfully passing the test inherent in trial.
 - e. He is the one who shall receive (future tense) the crown life, at the end of the examination, and not at its beginning, as is affirmed by some.
3. Peter, in 1Pet.1:5, speaking of those who have been begotten “unto a living hope,” and who have “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven,” says:
- a. They “are kept or guarded by the power of God”
 - b. They “are kept or guarded by the power of God through faith”
 - c. In other words, he declares there are two parts, parties or sides to this salvation reserved in heaven.
 - (1) God and man.
 - (2) God’s, the divine side, and man’s, the human side.
 - (3) Cf. 1Pet.1:9; Eph.2:8; Mk.16:15,16; 2Pet.1:5-11; Jude 21; Heb.5:8,9; Mt.7:21; Lk.6:46; Jas.2:14-26.
4. Neither Paul, James nor Peter, each of whom state conditions of salvation or for the crown to be received, say that anyone earns the “crown of righteousness”, “the crown of life”, “the inheritance that fadeth not away”, or “eternal life”.
- a. For neither remission of past sins nor eternal life is ever earned by human effort, merit and achievement.
 - b. But in all these instances, it is clear that the reception of the crown or the life or the inheritance is conditioned on or predicated on faithfulness and patient endurance. Cf. 1Cor.9:25-27; 2Tim.2:5; Heb.5:8,9.

E. WHO ARE THE RIGHTEOUS? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE RIGHTEOUS? HOW DOES ONE BECOME RIGHTEOUS?

1. Righteousness is the character or quality of being right or just; it was formerly spelled “rightwiseness,” which clearly expresses the meaning. W. E. Vine.
2. Thayer, 149 defines righteousness as:
 - a. “The virtue or quality or state of one who is righteous (1) in the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be ... the condition acceptable to God”
 - b. “In the writings of Paul...righteousness denotes the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner’s possession through that faith by

which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ.”

3. The book of Romans, written by inspiration, clearly declares that men become righteous in God’s sight or are made righteous or justified or declared free from the guilt of past sins by God by means of the gospel of Christ, which is God’s means of making men righteous, Rom.1:16,17; 3:19-28; 10:1-3; 9:30; 6:16-18.
 - a. Cf. Rom.1:17 with Gal.2:16 and Phil.3:8,9.
 - b. Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-41; 22:16.
4. The Lord promised in Mt.5:6 that all who “hunger and thirst after righteousness...shall be filled.”
5. The apostle in 2Th.2:9-14 warned that without a “love for the truth” no one could be saved, and revealed that it is through the gospel we are called and saved.
6. Furthermore, the N.T. teaches:
 - a. That God is no respecter of persons and that all who fear him and work righteousness are accepted with him, Ac.10:34,35.
 - b. That “he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous,” 1Jno.3:7 (to work righteousness is to do righteousness).
 - c. That “everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him,” 1Jno.2:29; cf. Ac.10:35; Jno.3:3-5; 1Pet.1:22-25.
 - d. That the righteous are those who are “filled with the fruit of righteousness,” Phil.1:11.
 - e. That “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil,” 1Pet.3:12.

III. CONCLUSION

1. We have identified the crown that is “laid up”
 - a. A “crown of righteousness”
 - b. An “incorruptible crown”
 - c. The “crown of life”
 - d. The “crown of glory that fadeth not away”
 - e. The eternal “inheritance that fadeth not away”
 - f. The “hope of eternal life,” the anchor of the soul.
2. This crown is “laid up” or “reserved in heaven” and received at the appearing of Christ – at his 2nd Coming.
3. It is promised to those who have endured temptation and love his appearing, and are kept by the power of God through faith.
4. It is the crown belonging to the righteous – those justified or made righteous by God’s means of making men righteous, which is the gospel of Christ.

