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For whom has Christ reserved a crown?

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim 4:8.

The phrase, "there is laid up" appears in Colossians 1:5. We can see its exact meaning there. "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel," Colossians 1:5.

- That for which the child of God hopes is the "crown of righteousness" to which Paul refers in our text.
- The child of God is an "overcomer" despite our many falls and set-backs and defeats.
- Our life of victory began at our conversion. 1 John 2:12-15, 4:4-6.
- Our overcoming is due to Christ's victory, John 16:33.
- Thus we are enabled to overcome sin, Romans 12:21.
- Even when we appear to suffer defeat, we remain overcomers through Christ. Compare Revelation 13:7 and 15:2

The finale of our overcoming is that moment when we receive the winner's garland from the hand of the Saviour.

What I wish you to notice is the title given to those to whom a crown of righteousness shall be given. "Them also that love his appearing."

It is important to note the title the Holy Ghost places upon them. Paul does not say "those who served as I did", or use the terms "believers", "the saved", "the born again" or any of the many other titles that are bestowed upon God's people. No, it is the title: "them also that love his appearing."

I. SUCH A TITLE INDICATES THE CHIEF EXPECTATION OF THE CHILD OF GOD.

The true believer is much occupied with thoughts of that great and gladsome day. The false professor gives no thought to that day for his is but an empty profession. To "love His appearing" entails a longing for that day, a looking for that day, a researching that day!

It occupies the very centre of our affections and thoughts.

1. The early church was filled with such an expectation. They were waiting for the return of Christ, 1 Cor 1:7; Rom 8:21-25. See also Php 3:20, 1 Thess 1:10, Tit 2:13, Hebs 9:28, 2 Pet 3:12. These are but some of the indications of the spirit of expectancy there was amongst the early believers.

2. It was not an expecting of Christ to appear in their day. Rather, "do we with patience wait for it," Romans 8:25. The early church was taught that much was to happen before the Christ's return. 2 Thess 2:3-5. Just as the Old Testament believers waited with patience so must we. Hebs 11:8-10. Abraham was aware that many, many years would pass before the promised Messiah would come. He saw the "day of Christ" and knew well it was far off, John 8:56, Hebs 11:13.

I do have to say that I believe that after 2000 years of waiting for the Saviour's return "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," James 5:8.

II. WITH SUCH A LOVE FILLING THEIR HEART, WHAT FAITHFULNESS AND ZEAL WILL BE DISPLAYED

Remember the parables the Saviour taught! Matt 24:44-51, Luke 12:42-46. Heed Paul's words. Heb 10:34-39.



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1. The unbeliever in every age mocks such a hope. 2 Pet 3:1-18. There is a spirit manifested amongst God's people akin to this spirit which Peter warns us of. It is that despising of the close study of the prophecies, which abound in the Word of God, of Christ's return. They may not deny the return of Christ but they deny what the Bible says of the circumstances of that return, given to stir up our watchfulness!

2. The Christian can have no greater motivation to serve than a consciousness of the Saviour's return. The Church slacks and sleeps when it forgets the return of Christ. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept," Matthew 25:5. A reawakening of the expectation of the Saviour's return leads to a reviving and a lively returning to its duties. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps," Matthew 25:7.

3. The hope of reward has ever motivated the labours of men. It is what drives the business houses of the world. Theirs, on the most part, is a greedy, sinful desire for reward. Christ has offered His people a reward for faithful labour. There are many references to that reward.

"The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust," Ruth 2:12.

"So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth," Psalm 58:11.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matthew 5:11-12.

"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly," Matthew 6:4.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward," 2 John 1:8.

"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth," Rev 11:18.

And here amongst the last words of the Saviour is a mention of the reward He has for His people.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," Rev 22:12.

III. WITH THE VISION OF CHRIST'S GLORIOUS RETURN EVER BEFORE US WE WILL SHARE IN PAUL'S CONFIDENCE

Remember, in the context of this verse, Paul is speaking of his approaching martyrdom.

1. Note the fearlessness he displays. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," verse 6. He uses the metaphor of the casting off the moorings of a ship ready to sail. He is not fearful.

2. Note the record of faithfulness of which he can speak. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," verse 7.

3. Note that his eye is upon the crown and the Dear One Who will bestow it. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day," verse 8.

Get your eyes on that day, on that crown and above all, on the glorious, victorious Christ and his return and



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you will live as did Paul.