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## Crowns and Rewards – Part 1

God bless you. This is Michael Northrup. We are moving into the topic of rewards and crowns in the New Testament, specifically in the epistles.

I have to thank a number of people, Janet and Alice and others, who reminded me that last spring when we covered genuine discipleship and transformation and growth to maturity I had said I would include a section on crowns and rewards. I got involved in the teaching, and I forgot. I was reminded again recently, and I said, okay, I have to do this!

As I began to look into crowns and rewards in the New Testament, I saw how perfectly it fits with what we're doing with reflexives in the epistles. It has been astounding to me. It is another example of how the Word fits together. God with his genius, perfection, and magnitude inspired holy men to write the Word. Peter and James and John and Paul wrote about rewards. Everything recorded fits together perfectly.

### Acts and Facts Recommendation

Before we begin there are a couple of things of interest that I've wanted to mention for a while. **The Institute for Creation Research** puts out a magazine called Acts and Facts. Here is a link to subscribe for free: <https://www.icr.org/subscriptions/signup>.

It comes every other month and provides a constant reminder of our creator God, the perfection of the human body, and how it proves that there was a creator. There is an article in here in the January/February 2024 issue entitled *DNA Repair, The Built-in Toolbox that Sustains Life*. DNA holds this intricate genetic blueprint for every creature. It is vulnerable to damage and requires constant repair. God designed the human body so that there are little robot-like enzymes that detect the damage and then snip and weld and reposition things to where they are supposed to be! And it totally eliminates Darwinism as a possibility.

### The Stand Magazine and <https://ilumened.org/>

The state of contemporary public education... I know many of you have grandchildren out there, great grandchildren, and the things that they're learning and required to do in class are a sheer demonstration of insanity. For example, you can't refer to he or she. You refer to people as Z and Zim and zur.

However, there is a growing movement to homeschool. There is a group that is assisting homeschoolers with online training and teaching for the kids.

And it is detailed in the American Family association magazine of January/February 2024, called the stand. This is an innovative virtual classroom where Christ is Lord.

It's just a wonderful response to the world system—teaching a biblical worldview to students.

### Decision Magazine: <https://decisionmagazine.com/>

Of course, there's the monthly magazine put out by the Billy Graham association called decision. Each month they have an article by Billy Graham, of course, posthumously.

This article is from 1957. And I want to read a few of the quotes from this. It points out again that the human heart has not changed. God is the only answer. These are not new things to you.

The title of the article is *Revival or the Spirit of the Age*.

<https://decisionmagazine.com/billy-graham-revival-or-the-spirit-of-the-age/>

The only solution to our issues and problems is to come back to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Billy Graham says that there's a revolt against authority of all kinds. Lawlessness is the spirit of the times.

Hello, 2024!

Analyze every expression of it. You will find it in an unwillingness to be controlled. And that is the fallen state of man exacerbated by the devil and by our culture.

And Billy Graham goes on to say,

The spirit of lawlessness is in the home. There's very little discipline in homes. Each child is a law unto himself.

Think of the transgender movement. We worship the children. Whatever they want to do, whatever they want to be, whatever they want to say, male, female, any of the 70 genders. Each child is a law unto himself. That's turning the biblical mandate of raising your children in the nurture and admonition of law on its head.

And he goes on to say that,

Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. (Ephesians 6:1)

Further here it says,

There has never been a nation in the history of the world that has ever improved morally apart from a revival coming back to God.

And the Word is the only answer. This is 1957! Billy Graham says:

I warn you—the issue in the United States at this moment is not political. It is spiritual. What are we going to do with Jesus Christ? That's the question that should confront every person today. The modern expressions of revolutions are the natural results of a lawlessness in the hearts of men. We are rebels against God. It could have been written today we have come to a place

We have come to a place where we must have another revolution if we are to be saved. The church must lead this revolution. We must have a revolution against corruption in high places, against immorality, licentiousness and sensuality, which are pervading every realm of our society.

And back in the fifties, we thought things were good... and compared to today they were! But think of how things have gotten worse and worse.

## 2 Peter 1:4

**4** by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.** in two Peter, chapter three, the corruption that's in the world through lust.

The essence of that Word, "corruption" is getting worse and worse and worse. Billy Graham goes on...

We must have a revolt against alcoholism and drug trafficking. We must have a revolt against lying, cheating and cutting corners in business. We must have a revolt against discrimination because of race, color or creed. We need a revolt against hypocrisy, spiritual indifference and slothfulness on the part of church members.

I call upon the church today to fall on its knees before God and ask the God and Captain of our salvation to lead us in a spiritual revolution that will shake the very foundations of the social structure.

These are magazines that would be great to get on a monthly basis, *Acts and Facts*, *the Stand*, *Decision*.

But if you watch the news, you see that we have a totally corrupt culture—the Word is the only answer.

I always talk about the persecuted church worldwide. Over Christmas in Nigeria, there was a Christmas massacre. Over 200 Christians murdered by Islamic radicals, 10,000 people were displaced and more than 1,000 homes were burned down. A thousand homes burned down by the majority Muslim Fulani ethnic group! That is the devil's world that we live in.

The last four sessions were on humility, the most recent was titled: NT 12 Nebuchadnezzar. Christ repeatedly said in the gospels, exalt yourself, you'll be humbled. Humble yourself, be exalted. A perfect example of that was Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament. That is why the record was included among New Testament teachings on humility.

Comments from listeners:

"I love this topic because we need to always keep it in the forefront of our mind,"

That is absolutely true given our nature and the world we live in and our inclinations. It is not a one-time thing and it's not something you arrive at. Humility needs to be constantly nurtured and we need to remind ourselves.

"If we were in the Old Testament and saw people putting sackcloth and ashes on themselves, we would almost daily have a good reminder to examine ourselves for pride."

What a great observation from the Old Testament. Visibly, what people would do to humble themselves and repent would put on sackcloth and ashes. And when we would see that, it would cause us to take our own inventory. Pride is so sneaky and deceptive.

In order for us to really grasp and tackle with confidence this issue of discipleship and growth to maturity, it's essential that we start with the foundation of who we are in Christ and what Christ did for us.

That is why we need to understand Romans 1–8. A number of years ago we did the entire book of Romans here. But in case you have forgotten or weren't a part of it, I suggest you look at Ken's section from his resource on sin. This section is titled "Under Sin, In Sin, Dead to Sin, Freed from Sin."

It looks at the early chapters of Romans and how often these show up and what they really mean. It is an essential foundation to understand who we are, what Christ did for us, what he accomplished for us, and who we are with our new identity. Because it is essential, if we're going to tackle these commands in the form of reflexives in the New Testament to help us be disciples, it's essential that we remember that we're righteous, we're forgiven, we're redeemed, we're sanctified, we're justified because of what Christ accomplished.

When we fall short or stumble, we can say, okay, I am righteous, I'm forgiven. I have a new identity. I'm a new creation in Christ and quickly move forward instead of wallowing in defeat and guilt and not being able to move on.

My thanks go out for comments from listeners. We are all in this body of Christ together and we need one another. We need to be able to accept help from one another.

## Rewards and Crowns – What will Your Eternity Be Like?

We now begin our section on rewards and crowns. This is a huge topic! Here are a couple resources I can point you to, should you like to delve into it further.

A book by John Schoenheit entitled The Christians Hope, The Anchor of the Soul.

<https://www.amazon.com/Christians-Hope-Anchor-Soul/dp/0985367490/>

There's also a class that you can have access to online called Living in Light of Eternity by Tom Burke at Scriptural Study Groups.

<https://bookstore.ssg.church/classes#Living%20in%20Light%20of%20Eternity>

Ken Petty also did a class by the same name, living in light of eternity.

<http://emmausroadbf.com/orderform2023.pdf>

There is a lot out there! There are a lot of different ways we could approach this study because it's such a huge topic. A few years ago, we did the Book of Revelation, which many people were asking for and interested in.

You can't look at the scriptures without seeing that rewards and eternity are a major topic. You can study the topic from many different angles.

You can study the hope of the return.

You can study end times.

You can study the Book of Revelation.

You can look at the Millennial Kingdom, you can look at the Antichrist.

You can look at the timeline regarding the rapture and tribulation.  
You can look at the Eternal Kingdom.

All of these things are related subjects of study. But what I want to focus on is the rewards, and even more specifically, the five crowns, which are detailed in the epistles.

### The Five Crowns

Here is a list of the five crowns with their scripture references:

The incorruptible crown	1 Corinthians 9:25
The crown of boasting or rejoicing	1 Thessalonians 2:19
The crown of righteousness	2 Timothy 4:8
The crown of life	James 1:12
The crown of glory	1 Peter 5:4

What are these crowns? How does one live in order to get one? What is the common theological agreement about the crowns if such agreement exists?

How does each one of those tie into the reflexives that we have covered and we're going to be covering in more depth?

Just to mention a few things about rewards, because oftentimes people will say, "Oh, well, Christ paid it all, Christ did it all. Salvation is by grace. So end of story, let's enjoy life, and I'll see you at the rapture."

### Salvation is by Grace But God is Just – People Will Get What They Deserve

Yes! Salvation is by grace, but rewards are by merit. God is just, he is righteous. And the scriptures are replete with references to God being just. The Bible repeatedly declares that people will eventually get what they deserve.

#### **Jeremiah 17:10**

[10](#) "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

#### **Psalm 62:12**

[12](#) and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

#### **Proverbs 24:12**

[12](#) If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?

#### **Jeremiah 32:19**

[19](#) great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds.

### **Ezekiel 33:20**

**20** Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."

### **Romans 2:6**

**6** He will render to each one according to his works:

There is no question about it if you seriously look at the scriptures! God is just. People will eventually get what they deserve.

### **Matthew 16:27**

For the son of man is going to come in his father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

## **Out of Love and Gratitude After Salvation – We WORK, We Serve, We Will be Rewarded**

Yes, salvation is by grace, but after we're saved in gratitude and out of love for God, **we work**, and then God is going to reward us eternally for what we do in this life.

I miss teaching live, and I miss the fellowship of people being together, but my ability to teach this with confidence is the fruit of taking time to devote myself more to study and then to present what I am seeing. We are going to get into depth as to what the crowns and how we must live in order to receive them. This is a vital topic since we're talking about eternity.

### **I Corinthians 3:10–15 (abridged)**

I laid a foundation as an expert builder, (Paul writing to the Corinthians) Someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. The fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he'll receive his reward. If it's burned up, he'll suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

The theme is consistent. If you look at the whole of scripture, all throughout the Bible, beginning to end, all of the men are looking forward to the end. From Genesis 3:15 with the fall of man, from that point forward, the subject of the entire Bible is getting to Revelation 21 and 22 and Edenic-like circumstances where relationship with God, presence of God, man dwelling with God, is the ultimate goal.

In that eternal kingdom, of course, we are heirs, joint heirs with Christ. But how we will spend that eternity is determined by how we live now. There are rewards available. So what greater, more important topic is there right now to cover than knowing about rewards and crowns?

## **We Must All Appear Before the Judgement Seat of Christ – Let's Not Be Ashamed!**

### **2 Corinthians 5:10**

**10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

There is no opting out of this. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body. This is Paul writing to the Corinthians, who are believers.

Let me say that again.

**We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.**

Doesn't just say good, whether good or bad. Okay?

**Colossians 3:23-25 (abridged)**

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward, anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong. And there's no favoritism.

Well, that ought to scare the pants off us.

**I Thessalonian 4:6**

6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.

The context here is about sexual sin. The Lord is an avenger in all these things, even as we told you before and solemnly warned you.

**2 John 1:8**

8 Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we<sup>a</sup> have worked for, but may win a full reward.

Sounds like a reflexive to me, doesn't it? You watch yourselves. You watch yourselves. Take heed unto yourself. Keep an eye on yourself. Why? So that you do not lose what we have worked for, but **that you may receive a full reward!**

And I want you and me and our families to receive a full reward, because there are going to be rewards handed out at the judgment seat. It sounds like rewards will be withheld from those who haven't done what is possible and commanded to do in this life.

**Luke 9:26**

26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

**I John 2:28**

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

Continue, continue, continue. Abide. Be faithful. Persevere. Why? So that when he appears, we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. We don't want to be ashamed. We don't want to have regret when the Lord returns. There is so much more on this as well.

People throughout Biblical time have been looking forward. Think of those named in Hebrews 11.

**Hebrews 11:24-26**

24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

There are a multitude of verses if you want to take your concordance and look up the word “reward.” Before we do I want to mention two things:

### People Will Work During the Millennial Kingdom

If you want to look at the rewards promised in the Old Testament to Israel before the mystery was revealed, you can see that in the Millennial Kingdom, that thousand-year kingdom following the tribulation period, there are actually many jobs listed as assignments for believers in Christ’s kingdom on earth. This may be new to you, but it’s everywhere in the Old Testament.

Heaven is not going to be some ethereal place up in the clouds, but there’s going to be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. This Millennial Kingdom, with Christ as the king, is going to be on the earth for a thousand years. Born-again believers are going to be a part of it.

Also, the Jews from the Old Testament who were faithful and who are raised at the Resurrection of the Just will be part of it as well as the people who make it through the tribulation period by staying faithful.

Consider this list of occupations that are stated for those in the Millennial Kingdom. Remember that in Eden, Adam worked. God designed man to work. Believers are going to work in the Millennial Kingdom.

#### 1. Builders

Isaiah 54:60-61

Jeremiah 30

Ezekiel 36

Amos 9

#### 2. Farmers Again, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Amos.

#### 3. Herdsmen

#### 4. Vine dressers

#### 5. Metal workers

#### 6. Fishermen

#### 7. Landscapers

#### 8. Servants

#### 9. Clean-up Duties

#### 10 Gravediggers

Herdsmen, vine dressers, metal workers, fishermen, landscapers, servants, and those who have cleanup duties and grave diggers. You may wonder, why wonder why there are going to be grave diggers?



It is because there are going to be natural people who make it through the Tribulation, who come into the Millennial Kingdom. Natural, body and soul people who survived Armageddon come into the kingdom and will die.

And that's why in the Old Testament it says people are going to live a really long time. Of course, that wouldn't apply to us because we are in the age of grace. When the rapture takes place, we're going to be like him. We will see him as he is.

So, there will be many jobs in the Millennial Kingdom and it says that believers are going to judge. So what kind of judge do you want to be during the Millennial Kingdom? What kind of position do you want to have? Remember, James and John came to Christ and said, when you come in your kingdom, I want to sit on your right hand and your left. They wanted positions of authority in the Millennial Kingdom. The status we have in the Millennial Kingdom is going to be determined by how we live now. It is part of our rewards.

We are making a lot of introductory comments here. We are going to take as much time as we need on crowns and rewards because it's so crucial. We're talking about our eternity.

I want to mention one other thing regarding rewards, and I reflected back on this.

When I was in the corporate world, I was in HR management for a Fortune 100 company. At one juncture, I was responsible for performance management and salary administration. Because it was a large company it was, of course, very regimented in terms of job descriptions and performance requirements, etcetera. I was responsible for about 1300 employees at the time with the salary administration. Every job had a job description. For each job description, there were major responsibilities, usually five, and then five minor responsibilities each with standards and goals and objectives. There were three categories. You either met, exceeded, or needed improvement in each one of these categories. As I said, it was a standard grid because in a very large company it needed to be very uniform for all and for all managers to utilize in supervising and rewarding employees. The reward, of course, was the raise at the end of your year during your evaluation. So it was a performance management system. The reward or the raise coincided with your performance.

Well, why does all of society work that way? And why do human beings work that way? Because we're created in the image of God. Makes sense. That is the way we are wired. You work, you meet standards, and you get rewarded for it. You don't meet standards and there are consequences.

Think of the Old Testament and blessings and cursings in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27 and 28., which we've covered innumerable times. You do this and you're rewarded with blessing. You don't and you do this and you're going to suffer consequences. It is just so simple. Yet human beings still don't seem to get it.

## Crowns and Rewards

In this teaching on crowns and rewards, I'm going to begin with some introductory comments giving the big picture and the conclusions that I've reached and feel confident about.

And then I'm going to go back and look at each component, each individual crown:  
crown of glory  
crown of righteousness  
crown of boasting  
crown of life  
incorruptible crown

Then we will come back again after looking at all five and show how the big picture has been verified by looking at the individual crowns. In looking at this topic, since it's one of those areas where in the Word, it doesn't specifically say what a crown is, we have to do a lot of digging and study in order to put together the whole scope of scripture.

I want to highlight this by responding to a comment that somebody made after listening to the teaching where I talk about I Corinthians 6 and food is made for the stomach, stomach made for the food.

### **I Corinthians 6:13**

Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other.

The question was raised, "What about Luke 8, where Jesus healed the woman and then Jairus' daughter... this is one of the areas where it doesn't say specifically why. We have to read and then we have to speculate.

It's very important whenever we read the scripture that we are intentional about saying, okay, this is exactly what it says. It says it here. It says it in five places. It's completely clear. There's total clarity here. There's no question.'

But if something isn't clearly defined and we do have to speculate, then we need to say, this is what I've read. This is the context. I see the immediate context, and the broader context of the epistles and of the whole Word. So this is where I've landed and it's what I feel comfortable with, but it's still open to additional information. Later on I may alter my view a little bit.

### **Example of Speculation or Logical Deduction in The Study of God's Word: Give her to eat.**

Here is an example of this, and thanks to Jessica for presenting this question.

#### **Luke 8:41**

[41](#) And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, [42](#) for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus made his way to the daughter there is the record of the woman with the issue of blood that he heals.

#### **Luke 8:49 – 56**

[49](#) While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." [50](#) But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."

There is the promise of God! Hear it and don't fear, believe and she will be well.

[51](#) And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. [52](#) And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." [53](#) And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

Okay, she is dead. She's been dead for a little while. They're weeping. Christ comes in and says, no, she's not dead, she's sleeping. They laughed in response.

[54](#) But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise."

Undeterred, but taking her by the hand, he called, saying, child, arise.

[55](#) And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. [56](#) And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

The verse seems to stand out and you think, "What is that doing there?" He just raised somebody from the dead and he says, give her something to eat. And you think, what is that all about? Jessica had posed the question, what is that all about?

It doesn't say specifically why Christ said, give her something to eat. However, from reading the context, then we may speculate and say, I'm speculating about this. But here, what I know about God, what I know about Christ, what I know about healing, what I know about the gospels, what I know about nature. Here is what I come up with. The child was definitely dead. They laughed at Christ when he said, she's sleeping. He raised her from her sleep, and this was indication that she was truly alive by saying, have something to eat.

This is what I'm thinking, as a possibility. He was saying, okay, you are really alive. For this twelve year-old girl, hey, I'm alive. Oh, I can eat. I mean, I really am alive. I'm alive. And then the others could see, wait a minute, this isn't a short-term thing, just that he raised her and then she's going to go back to sleep or die in another hour or two hours or a day after he leaves. No, resume your normal activities. Time to get up and eat. Life's going on and we're going to resume your life as you had it before. So again, this is just my speculation. Your life's going on. You're now part of life again. And everybody else can see you and understand this.

Now the other thing is they laughed when he said she was asleep. He didn't say dead, he said she was asleep. What do people do when they get up from sleeping normally? They say, hey, I'm hungry, I want something to eat. Or you get up from a nap, I'm hungry, I want something to eat.

This demonstrated to the unbelievers in the room that Christ was right and they were wrong. They didn't believe his Words, which were the truth. So that's an example of our speculation about why that verse out of the blue says he gave her something to eat.

## Many Speculate About The Five Crowns

I share this as we head into our study of the crowns because there are many who speculate about what these crowns are and what they are not. That is what has propelled me for a week

to delve into it further, to try to get a grip and a grasp on why God uses the concept of crowns to talk about rewards. So many things have come to mind with respect to this.

First, the world crowns people or recognizes, acknowledges, gives glory to people for doing what the world wants and doing what the world says. It is part of the devil's world. People want adulation, glory, awards. Consider all the award shows that we have on TV and think of how all of society is built around glory for individuals who succeed and accomplish something in the world. Crowns are given to those who succeed in conforming to the world.

But what happened to Christ? What was he crowned with when he rejected the crown that the people wanted to give him of being the king. Instead they gave him a crown of thorns. Those who opposed and hated what he was doing, instead of lauding him and giving him adulation and praise, they gave a crown of thorns to inflict pain and suffering, to persecute him and to warn others: "If you don't conform, this is what's going to happen."

There are crowns that we can get in this life versus the crowns that are promised to us for eternity. We get to choose, and we're going to see that in I Timothy 4 concerning the difference between Paul and Demas.

Many of the commentators speculated about what the crowns are and each specific crown. However, I have gravitated toward what Kistemaker comes up with in his commentary. I believe the scriptures substantiate this.

We want to look at the big picture of rewards and crowns.

**The crowns represent acknowledgement, achievement, accomplishment for living out discipleship.**

The five different crowns listed are simply different components of the recognition and accomplishment for what you do in this life. It's not like in the eternal kingdom, you got five crowns or you got three crowns or you got a crown and a half, or you're still walking around because your mother crowned you when you misbehaved.

It's similar to a job description with many different aspects of what your responsibilities are. You put them all together and as a whole, you see how you've done. We will each be evaluated in terms of what the standards are, and then we will be recognized for our performance of those standards.

Crowns are also things that others can see, so others will be able to notice that, hey, this person was a faithful disciple in his life and he's rewarded for it. Again, there are many different jobs in the Millennial Kingdom, etcetera.

In my study regarding crowns, I looked at some early church history. The Greek Word for "crown" is [\*stéphanos\*](#).

*stéphanos* – properly, a wreath (garland), awarded to a victor in the ancient athletic games (like the Greek Olympics); the crown of *victory*.

James talks about one of the crowns, the crown of life. God doesn't simply have one person address the topic or use the phrase, which might cause others to speculate, well, that was just Paul, or that was just John, that was just James, that was just Peter.

No, once again, in keeping with his own written law in the Old Testament of two or three witnesses. There are three witnesses using crowns.

There's Paul, incorruptible crown.

There's James with the crown of life.

There's Peter with the crown of glory.

There's Paul with the crown of righteousness.

It's beautiful how it all fits together.

So, the Greek Word translated "crown" is [stéphanos](#). There is a lot of background and history regarding this in the first century. It was a Word that was very easily recognized by the people in the first century church. The use of [stéphanos](#) in the ancient world is widespread.

And by the time the New Testament was written in the first century AD, the Word had been used in the context of crown and wreath for nearly a thousand years. Homer spoke of it, Pliny spoke of it. So the Word was well established. They were all very familiar with the Olympic Games. And Paul was writing to the Corinthians, who were only 10 miles from where the Isthmian Games were taking place every two years.

Of course, we know the Olympic Games as well, but there were the Isthmian Games. Scholars say that Paul was in Corinth for a year and a half, around 51–52 AD, and that the Isthmian Games took place during that time. He's only 10 miles away. Of course, he was very familiar with it.

Wreaths and crowns were used in a myriad of contexts. Victors in athletic competitions were crowned with wreaths of olive. The wreaths were cut from what they considered sacred olive trees. It was an indication of victory and signified immense honor to the recipient of the crown. It was a great prize, a special prize.

The author here of this from early church history, WordPress writes that it was reserved for certain days, occasions, and carried with it connotations of salvation, glory, victory and completion.

Those adjectives are so applicable when we read about the five crowns. The components and the behavior required to see that it's glory for eternity, foregoing the glory now, it's victory for eternity, foregoing victory in this life. It's completion of the task assigned by God rather than conforming to the world.

We will see that each one of these crowns is given for the completion of the tasks which are specifically assigned to the disciple.

The author here goes on to say the crown was holy. It was a picture of the ultimate prize. And again, it was written by James to those who were being persecuted to help them to persevere.

## Crowns and Rewards are an Ultimate and an Essential Ingredient as part of our Hope.

Next time we'll begin by reading some verses about the hope and how prevalent it is in the New Testament. Paul, Peter and John are continually seeking to get us to focus on what is to come.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the Word, for all Christ accomplished for us, for our God given righteousness, redemption, holiness before you, sanctification. And we ask that we can continue to learn and grow in our understanding of the Word and see what you have for us regarding eternity and what our role is now. While we live as disciples on this earth, we give you the glory and praise in Christ's name I pray. Amen.