

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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“He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?” Galatians 3:5

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Pathway 2000

February 28
through
March 12

See letter from
Living Stream Ministry
at right for information

• Call us at
1-888-543-3788

Dear Life-study Listener,

This month is a busy one for us in the radio section at Living Stream Ministry as we conclude *Life-study of Matthew* and begin *Life-study of Revelation*. We are also in the midst of conducting our annual campaign to find out from you, our listeners, how we are doing. We have named our campaign for this year Pathway 2000, a fitting name, not only because we are planning our pathway for the year ahead, but because the pathway to glory is a major theme of the Gospel of Matthew. We hope you join us on the pathway to glory that our Lord Jesus pioneered for His seekers.

The past few years we have conducted campaigns similar to Pathway 2000, sending a free book to those who called us. We hoped to motivate listeners who had not previously called us to do so in order that we could properly evaluate the many stations we broadcast on. As we begin another new year, it is again important for us to know which stations are reaching God's seeking people.

Pathway 2000 will take place this year during our broadcasts from February 28th through March 12th. First-time callers will receive a free book, *A Brief Definition of the Kingdom of the Heavens*. But we encourage all of you to respond, so anyone calling or writing us during this time with specific comments concerning the life-study radio broadcasts will also receive the free book. Your feedback is important to us. We hope you contact us to let us know you are still listening and enjoying the broadcasts. Please pray for us as we continue to endeavor by His grace to consistently bring you the treasures of this ministry.

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS THE RAPTURE OF THE OVERCOMERS?

To many of our listeners the term, the rapture of the overcomers, may be unfamiliar. In general, Christians have heard that at a certain point in time, when the Lord is ready to come, He will descend on the clouds and the multitude of His believers, both the living and the dead, will be caught up to meet Him in the air. This is based upon the statement of the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, which describes the general rapture of all believers at the end of this age just before Christ's descent to judge the world. It will take place at the time of the last trumpet (cf. 1 Cor. 15:52).

Through a careful reading of the New Testament, however, one can discover other events of rapture. In the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord cautioned the believers to be watchful: "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes" (24:42). He tells of two men in a

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RAPTURE

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field—one shall be taken (in rapture) and the other left. Likewise, two women grinding at a mill—one is taken and the other is left (vv. 40, 41). That these ones are all believers is proven by the words “watch therefore” and “your Lord.” Then in the same chapter of Matthew, through the parable of a slave who is set over his master’s household, the Lord further warns the disciples to be faithful and prudent. If he is faithful, that slave will receive a reward at the coming of his Master. But if he is not faithful, thinking that his Lord is delaying his coming, he will be punished (vv. 45-51). (To be cut asunder indicates a cutting off from the glory of Christ in His kingdom for a season, not an eternal judgment in the lake of fire.) Thus there are some believers who, having been watchful, are ready for our Lord’s return prior to the great tribulation; they will be caught up in rapture, and will receive a reward for their faithfulness. According to the Scriptures, this occurs earlier than the general rapture described in 1 Thesalonians.

The book of Revelation speaks frequently of him who overcomes (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Then in chapter 12 we are told that the man-child who would rule with an iron rod (cf. 2:26-27) “was caught up to God and to His throne.” This is a rapture to the throne (not just to the air), a rapture of the overcomers who will initiate the expulsion of Satan from the heavens to the earth. Later in chapter 14, we read of the firstfruits who are standing with the Lamb on heavenly Mount Zion, an indication that they, having ripened earlier, are raptured to the heavenly dwelling place for the Father’s enjoyment (vv. 1-5). They precede the general harvest (corresponding to the general rapture of 1 Thesalonians) which is depicted in verses 14 and 15 of the same chapter. Based on these portions of the Bible in Matthew and Revelation, we speak of the rapture of the overcomers. May the Lord’s word to us cause us to be watchful and live a life preparing for His coming that we could be raptured as His overcomers.

For further reading on this subject, please see the footnotes on 1 Thes. 4:17, Rev. 12:5, footnote 2 of Rev. 14:4, and the footnotes on Rev. 14:15 in the New Testament Recovery Version; Life-study of Matthew, messages 63-66; and The Kingdom, chapters thirty-nine and forty, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

FOOTNOTES FROM

Matthew

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Matthew 28:19—Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the ¹Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

¹Matthew and John are the two books in which the Divine Trinity is revealed more fully than in all the other books of the Scripture, that God’s chosen people may participate in and enjoy Him. For our experience of life, John unveils the mystery of the Godhead in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, especially in chs. 14–16; whereas for the constituting of the kingdom, Matthew discloses the reality of the Divine Trinity by giving one name for all three. In the opening chapter of Matthew, the Holy Spirit (1:18), Christ (the Son—1:18), and God (the Father—1:23) are present for the producing of the man Jesus (1:21), who, as Jehovah the Savior and God with us, is the very embodiment of the Triune God. In ch. 3 Matthew presents a scene in which the Son was standing in the water of baptism under the opened heaven, the Spirit like a dove descended upon the Son, and the Father spoke out of the heavens to the Son (3:16-17). In ch.

12 the Son, in the person of man, cast out demons by the Spirit to bring in the kingdom of God the Father (12:28). In ch. 16 the Father revealed the Son to the disciples for the building of the church, which is the life pulse of the kingdom (16:16-19). In ch. 17 the Son entered into transfiguration (17:2) and was confirmed by the Father’s word of delight (17:5), bringing about a miniature display of the manifestation of the kingdom (16:28). Eventually, in the closing chapter, after Christ as the last Adam had passed through the process of crucifixion, entered into the realm of resurrection, and become the life-giving Spirit, He came back to His

disciples in the atmosphere and reality of His resurrection to charge them to make the heathen the kingdom people by baptizing them into the name, the person, the reality, of the Divine Trinity. Later, in the Acts and the Epistles it is disclosed that to baptize people into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is to baptize them into the name of Christ (Acts 8:16; 19:5), and that to baptize them into the name of Christ is to baptize them into Christ the person (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), because Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, and He, having become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), is available at any time and in any place for people to be baptized into. According to Matthew, being baptized into the reality of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is for the constituting of the kingdom of the heavens. Unlike an earthly society, the heavenly kingdom cannot be formed with human beings of flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50); it can be constituted only with people who have been immersed into the union with the Triune God and who have been established and built up with the Triune God, who has been wrought into them.

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The verse and footnote above are from the New Testament Recovery Version, published by Living Stream Ministry.