

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 25, MAY 2000

"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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Dear *Life-study* Listener,

This month *The Hearing of Faith* takes on a new look. We have redesigned our newsletter to improve its readability and make it easier for you to enjoy. Each month we try our best to provide you with information and healthy ministry to keep you up-to-date, nourished, and strong in the faith.

It was helpful to get feedback from you about our radio program a few months ago during Pathway 2000. Now we are asking you for feedback on our monthly newsletter and its different components such as the "What Is" article, our "Highlights," "Footnotes from New Testament Recovery Version," "Response from Listeners," and "The Path of Life." We hope you will take a few moments to let us know your thoughts by filling out the enclosed survey card and sending it back to us in the return envelope.

Recently we added a new station in New Zealand. If you have friends or relatives there, they can hear *Life-study of the Bible* not only through the Internet, but on the radio as well. Next month we will include a complete list of all stations broadcasting *Life-study of the Bible* in English.

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS AN OVERCOMER?

The Bible sounds a definite call to God's people to overcome a multitude of things: Satan, sin, the world, the flesh, and the fallen human life. Those who love the Lord Jesus sense a corresponding echo within, calling them to live an overcoming life. In order to live the life of an overcomer and be rewarded as an overcomer by Christ at His second coming (Rev. 22:12), we must first know what the Bible calls an overcomer.

The first qualification of an overcomer is faith. First John 5:5 asks, "Who is he who overcomes the world except him who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" Belief in Christ is the initial, most fundamental component of overcoming. In 1 John the apostle John linked overcoming with faith because he was battling false teachings that denied a central point of the faith—the deity of Jesus. Therefore, to overcome the tide of heresy, one must first believe in Christ's divinity by confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. This faith thus becomes the basis, the foundation, of an overcoming life. Nevertheless, simply believing does not guarantee that at the end of our life's journey we will receive an overcomer's reward. While all overcomers are believers, not all believers, though they are eternally saved, will be overcomers. Believing is only the initiation into the overcoming life.

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Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND

COMMUNITY RADIO

HAMILTON, INC.

1206 AM

6:30 P.M.

FRIDAY

OVERCOMER

(continued from page 1)

Following this initial step of believing is the Lord's lifelong call to all His believers to live and serve Him faithfully that they may be qualified to receive the overcomer's reward. Every believer receives eternal life as a gift (Rom. 6:23) through faith, not by works (Eph. 2:8). However, in Revelation 2 and 3 there is a further call to the churches for overcomers with the promise of a *reward* for faithfulness. This is the same reward promised in 1 Corinthians 3:14 to the believers whose life and work passes through the testing fire at the coming judgment seat of Christ (v. 15, 2 Cor. 5:10). First Corinthians 3:15 tells us a believer can still be saved, yet suffer the loss of this reward. He forever keeps the free gift of God, eternal life (John 10:28), but he may lose the prize Paul spoke of in Philippians 3:14: "I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward." This prize is the wedding feast of the Lamb with His overcoming believers (Rev. 19:7, 9), who will rule and reign with Christ in His heavenly kingdom for a thousand years.

Since the call for overcomers in Revelation 2 and 3 is to the *churches*, it is obviously a call to those who have taken the first step of believing. Such a call from Christ to His believers was necessary because the condition of the church had already degraded by the end of the first century.

The hope of our calling—actually, God's hope in calling each of us—is that all His believers would also be overcomers, those who love Him supremely and daily choose to live by Him and unto Him. Romans 5:17 promises, "Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." May the Lord gain our loving response to His call for overcomers!

For further reading on this subject, please see footnotes for Revelation 2 and 3 in the New Testament Recovery Version; The Overcomers by Witness Lee; and God's Overcomers and The Overcoming Life by Watchman Nee, all published by Living Stream Ministry.

Highlights

FROM LIFE-STUDY OF REVELATION

"He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name." Rev. 3:12

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING MADE A PILLAR

What is the significance of being made a pillar and of being written upon by the Lord? How can the Lord make us, who are so natural, being wood or mud, into pillars? The only way is by transforming us, that is, by carrying away our natural element and by replacing it with His divine essence. The meaning of the word "make" in 3:12 is to constitute us into something, to construct us in a creative way. This is transformation. . . .

The epistle to the church in Philadelphia has never been as open to the Lord's children as it is today. Throughout the years, Christians have lacked the genuine experience of God's transformation and building. Due to this lack, there has been no understanding of 3:12. Again I say that it is only through experience that we have begun to realize the significance of this verse. Today in the proper church life the Lord is making us, mere pieces of wood, into pillars in the temple of God. This sentence is simple, but its significance is profound. In the church in Philadelphia the Lord is not correcting us or even just burning us. He is in the process of making us, old ones and new ones alike, into a pillar in the temple of God. This certainly means something. The only way the Lord can accomplish this is by being the divine flow within us. Not even the Lord can do a quick work in this matter. He patiently works Himself into us as the divine flow, not to correct our outward behavior but to carry away our natural essence. God does not desire the mere improvement of our behavior. Today the Lord desires the proper church life. For this, He is eager to get into us at this very moment. Do not wait until tomorrow and do not wonder about others. Look at yourself. The Lord's work in the church is to work Himself into you as the

divine flow to carry away your natural being and to replace it with His divine substance that you may gradually be processed by His transforming element. This is all we need. As God is transforming us, we shall become something else—the precious material for His building. The more we become this material, the more He will build us into His building. Ultimately, this building will become the New Jerusalem.

Life-study of Revelation, pp. 376-377, by Witness Lee

