

Overcoming the World
Harmony M.B.C., July 1, 2012
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1John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

1John 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

John had a knack for stating things simply, yet packing an enormous amount of meaning into such words. This is one of those cases. Here he writes the simple truth that those born of God overcome the world. Now, on its face, that looks like a real simple statement, but thinking about it, and connecting the rest of his statement with it, the words altogether convey one of the most significant statements in the bible for people of God making their way through this wicked, sin cursed world that is dominated by the evil doings of unbelieving humanity.

Jesus told us in **Luke 16:8** that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, and the statement appears to be a contradiction in reality because we know that all wisdom that is meaningful resides in God, and we have access to that wisdom if we seek it. But, when we examine His statement more carefully, we realize that He is simply saying that when the children of mammon move through the world, they have a kind of natural affinity for worldly wisdom and they have both the intuition and willingness to use it. On the other hand, the Lord's people, the children of light, follow the path of Godly wisdom, and as a result their manner of doing business does not fit into the earthly environment like the lost do. Let me illustrate: Two men work at this same company. They both are given the job of getting a contract with another company to buy produce. Both men talk to 3 companies that provide produce and get three separate bids. They then talk to a fourth company, and in each case a different representative tells them if they will give him the amount of the other three bids, he will make it worth their while. Neither of these men know what has been arranged with the other one. The first man, practicing the wisdom of the world, does the deal, and gets a lower bid from the last company. The second man, knowing how the wisdom of the world works, but having the wisdom of God also, turns down the offer and recommends the contract be done with the company that has the best produce at the lowest price. The first man profited by following a simple worldly-wise rule; the second man gained no earthly prize or profit by following the rules of God.

I used that illustration to show in a simple way what scripture means when it says that those who are born of God overcome the world. It is only those with the new birth who have any hope or ability to rip free from the influences of the world. And that is because they have been made free by the power of the Spirit of God.

Now, this overcoming is summarized by John in the last sentence of verse 4. That is, this is the victory that overcomes the world; even our faith. And that is the subject of our message today. We will look at:

- 1) What is there to overcome?
- 2) What is meant by faith overcoming the world

I. What is there to overcome and what is meant by faith overcoming it?

- We want to use a few verses from Hebrews 11 to stir up our minds. We won't look at all the examples, but we will look at some that are the most challenging today:
 - ▶ v.2 - overcoming a bad reputation
 - ▶ v.3 - overcoming brainwashing by intellectualism and human philosophy
 - ▶ v.4 - overcoming mediocrity in service and worship of God
 - ▶ v.5 - overcoming the tendency to have conduct unpleasing to God
 - ▶ v.7 - overcoming unbelief (not in the sense of not believing in Christ, but in the sense of not trusting in the promises and warnings of God) and overcoming lack of industry in service to God
 - ▶ v.8 - overcoming the tendency to be influenced by convenience and status quo
 - ▶ v.9 - overcoming the tendency to become complacent and satisfied with the things of this world
 - ▶ For time's sake we want to look at one more: skip down to vv. 24-25 - overcoming the allure and temptation of what this world offers
 - Never in the history of man has there been a more opportune time to get rich and famous by doing evil
 - We literally have thousands, if not millions of people in private sector business and in politics who are piling up huge profits and much power by evil means which have never been more rampant than today