

OVERWHELMED *Isaiah 36,37*

Think for a moment on those times when you have been overwhelmed by what seems impossible situations? Maybe you lost your job, a loved one, or your business faced bankruptcy and you stood a good chance of losing your home. The more you play through the various possible scenarios in your mind, the more you might become overwhelmed.

In Isaiah 36 and 37 we read of the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, coming up against King Hezekiah of Judah. Sennacherib's army was enormous. Isaiah 37:36 indicates that the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 of the Assyrian army and that wasn't the whole army!

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ Prison edition USA getting into 285 prisons and 160 Canadian prisons. We have considerable interest from other prisons who work closely with our partner Crossroad Prison Fellowship
- ★ New office location for Cobus and Christa (Director for South Africa) at very little cost. A vehicle was also donated to the ministry
- ★ A number of gifts coming into Challenge to help fund overseas projects, also general funding for the ministry
- ★ A part time journalist (Eugenie Harris) coming on-board two days per week.

As overwhelming as the situation may have appeared, the problem wasn't the problem. The problem was how Hezekiah was going to face the problem.

In Isaiah 37 Hezekiah gives us first-hand directions on how to deal with a situation that is, humanly speaking, overwhelming.

1 We should bring our problems to God first, verse 1. Whilst this may seem obvious, it is amazing how often we will do everything other than go to God first. It is certainly good to talk things over with other Christians, but it should never become a substitute for going straight to God. Why? Because only the Lord can do a work in our hearts. Only the Lord can turn our overwhelming feelings of fear into triumphant faith.

2 We need to listen for God's message, verses 2, 5 and 7. When a child of God is assailed by overwhelming problems through the attacks of the enemy, we need to see that in effect it is God who is being attacked.

As the Rabshakeh, Sennacherib's senior officer, spoke words of intimidation, arrogance and bluff, he was looking to discourage. When we look to God for His message, He speaks words of encouragement. Isaiah comforted his people from verse 6 when he says: *"Thus says the Lord: 'Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard ...'"*

3 We need to see that God is glorified in the situation, verses 4, 16-20. Hezekiah's primary concern was that the Assyrians had questioned God's person, character and ability. So when he opens up in prayer the first thing he does is to declare that "You are God". By doing this Hezekiah and his people are encouraged to get their focus right.

I believe that this is a key element in knowing victory over any problem that besets us. Focus on the problem and it will always overwhelm us. Focus on God

Continued over

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and the problem never seems as overwhelming as we first thought.

As Hezekiah lays out his concerns before God he reminds his people that the Assyrians worshipped dead idols, but Israel worshipped the one and only living God.

4 Once we have prayed we must trust God to work. In Isaiah 37:3, Hezekiah readily recognized that Israel was helpless to defend themselves. As Israel awaited God's provision the angel of the Lord fought their battle for them.

Sennacherib was humbled by the living God. Ironically, Sennacherib perished in the temple of the idols he worshipped, by the hands of his own sons.

I have found that I have had to learn this lesson time and again, that there is no replacement for simple trust in the living God.

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ Funding for USA / Canada prison edition. 30,000 papers are distributed every two months at the moment
- ★ Challenge paper for Malawi. There is delay each time we try to get the papers across the border, from border closures to new charges and taxes
- ★ The Lord's protection from the schemes of the enemy for each Challenge edition as we continue to take new ground for Jesus
- ★ Testimonies for the editions of Challenge
- ★ Finances to replace our current Challenge vehicle. It is very important we have a reliable vehicle especially when visiting rural churches

Wanted. Resources for Challenge Children's Pages

Seeking 1950's - 1960's children's puzzle/activity books (Christian and general interest, though not Santa themed). Completed or part-completed okay.

To use for ideas, inspiration, modification if copyright permits.

Children's "annuals" also if they have significant activity components.

Dot-to-dots, spot the difference, etc.

Contact bob@challengenews.org if you have been hoarding these and want to pass them on to a new home; or on loan.

your testimony

Please consider sharing your testimony through the printed page.

See **challenge.news/testimony/** for guidelines

MY RESPONSE

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