

## WHEN I AM OVERWHELMED

By Paul M Hanssen

Allow me to state upfront that this lesson is not just a lesson but also a personal testimony of my own experience. What I will share will not touch or mean anything to everyone. Some will shrug it off like water on a duck's back, but others, who have walked in the Spirit with us, will understand its meaning and power.

### ***Psalm 143:3-4***

*For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

### **AMPLIFIED BIBLE:**

*For the enemy has persecuted me, He has crushed my life down to the ground; He has made me dwell in dark places, like those who have been long dead. Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed and weak within me [wrapped in darkness]; My heart grows numb within me.*

Few spiritual and emotional feelings are more intense and heavier than the persecution of the soul; being smitten down low and level with the ground and dwelling in dark, gloomy, and oppressive places, as with those long dead. David expressed these experiences as “overwhelmed and desolate.” (Or as the Amplified Bible states: Overwhelmed and weak, wrapped in darkness and numb in the heart).

**OVERWHELM:** The word overwhelmed is translated from the Hebrew word *aw-taf'*, meaning to shroud, i.e. clothe, from the idea of darkness, to languish (to lose or lack vitality & strength), cover over, fail, faint, feeble, hide self, and swoon (to faint from extreme emotion).

The word “overwhelm” combines two words: over and whelm. Whelm means to submerge, engulf, bury, and heap up. So, to be *overwhelmed* is to be covered over and immersed in something, cloaked and covered, as the meaning of the word suggests.

**PERSECUTION OF THE SOUL:** The persecution of the soul is a favorite tactic employed by demonic forces to wear down the saints of God under oppressive darkness and gloom. This oppression descends like a shroud, a cloak, or a garment that bears the weight of concrete. This weight resembles the sorrow that grips the soul when a loved one passes away; it is akin to wearing a coat of hopelessness.

**ALL THE SENSES BLOCKED & BLACKHOLE:** It blocks all the senses to the point where it seems impossible to see (faith), to taste (prayer), to smell (hope), to hear (to remember and to reverence), and to touch (worship). Paralyzes of the fivefold senses cripples' one's ability to function spiritually leaving massive gaps of void space like a blackhole that has the intense pull of gravity looking for anything to fill the void; food (or new age inspired diets), entertainment, technology, drugs, sex, pleasures, sleep, aggression (a good argument or war), and much more.

**OVERCOME BY EMOTIONS:** We can be overwhelmed by fear, doubt, pain, opposition, rejection, past or present, and even thoughts of our future. We can be overwhelmed by emotions that paralyze our ability to function, not to mention inner struggles that oppress and depress the soul. All of this, and more, is then stretched and elongated by demonic entities on a mission to destroy you, blind your eyes to vision and purpose, and knock you out of the race. The ultimate goal of these opposing spirits is destruction and death.

**ELIJAH'S EXPERIENCE:** The prophet Elijah is a classic example of becoming overwhelmed and persecuted in his soul.

*But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. (1 Kings 19:4)*

**JEZEBEL STILL RULED:** Elijah's victory on Mount Carmel exalted him, lifting him in hope that what God had accomplished through him would topple Queen Jezebel's reign and power over God's people. *But it did not.* After he had stood for God, called down fire, and slain the prophets of Baal, nothing changed;

Jezebel still ruled. His vision and purpose were smashed to the ground. As high and exalted as he had been through God's mighty works on the top of Mt. Carmel, so also, he sank as low as he had been high and became overwhelmed with depression, hopelessness, fear, doubt, and confusion. Without thinking of the result or where his actions were taking him, he fled for his life while at the same time desiring to die.

**THE AFTERMATH OF A GLORIOUS EXPERIENCE:** Elijah's suffering was a reaction to fatigue, stress, and strained emotions; it was the kind of experience that often follows in the aftermath of the soul being exalted to the heights of glory and victory during a Summit, revival, or a personal experience with God and time of revelation whilst basking in God's presence. A massive void is created at such times, a vacuum that can draw the soul and spirit into a dark place. Here, demons wait; they lurk, seeking an open door to enter and make habitation. This is what leads many mighty men and women of God into addictions, overindulgence of food, promiscuity, and secret sins—all an attempt to fill a void.

After the Summit in Mexico, where intense spirits of witchcraft attacked us and attempted to shut my mouth, I was alone in a steam room at the hotel where we stayed (trying to assist my lungs that were fighting a terrible infection). As I lay there in the heat, trying to relax and unwind, my soul and spirit sank into an oppressed and downcast state. I am not unfamiliar with this experience. I felt the vacuum and void as I often have, but this time it was different; my senses grabbed all opposing words, attitudes, opposition, rejections, and scorn. The cloak of overwhelming sorrow, pain, and failure gripped me. When I got back to our room and I shared with my wife what I was experiencing, I said, "I need to write a book titled 'When The Work is Done - The War After the Victory.'"

Since then, until a few days ago, I have been shrouded in the overwhelming sense of failure and the temptation to follow Elijah's example. Like I said, this is nothing new. God has allowed me to be part of powerful and glorious experiences with His people worldwide for 45 years. I know what it's like to be exalted with revelation knowledge and be a vessel of the demonstrations of God's power. I also know what it's like to feel the void, the vacuum, and like you have been dropped on the ground like a worthless piece of trash. But this time around, it has had a new level of intensity. This time, something very personal,

directed, and targeted was happening. As the overwhelm engulfed me, I felt isolated, alone, and downcast.

**WHAT IS THE ANSWER?** Where does one go to find answers? Of course, the answer is to go to the Lord. So, I did, I have! The result was a simple but intense experience of overcoming. God gave me the most powerful key to victory that I have ever held in my hand. It is so simple, it is nothing new, it is not a hidden secret, and it is not a profound revelation. It is something we all know but do not practice enough.

**Matthew 26:38 [NIV](#)**

*Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."*

*Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. (Matthew 26:38 KJV)*

**JESUS - OUR EXAMPLE:** Jesus was nearing the end and the fulfillment of the Father's reason for sending Him to walk among men. He knew the plan; He had surrendered to the plan that had been presented to Him in eternity past. He had been slain before the foundation of the world to redeem and buy back fallen humankind for their fallen state. This was His mission among men; He knew His mission.

However, as He approached the ultimate fulfillment, Calvary's Cross, He was overwhelmed with sorrow, to the extent that His human body could not withstand the strain. It seemed as if He would die in the garden and never reach what He was destined for. But instead of letting the "overwhelm" distract Him from His Father, He uttered three words that formed the most powerful and profound proclamation that anyone can ever speak; these three words are the key to overcoming in the darkest times.

**Luke 22:41-43**

*And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

**THE RESULT:** When these three words, NOT MY WILL, become your anthem, when they are the lyrics of your song, when they are the theme of your vision and purpose, and when these words proceed out of your mouth from the core of your being, strength, power, and the ability to finish and accomplish your course is the result.

There is no demon, no demonic entity, and no opposing principality, power, ruler of darkness, or spiritual wickedness in high places that can withstand the power of this proclamation. It transforms you while it changes everything around you. Nothing may change, and yet everything changes.

BACK TO ELIJAH: What was his ultimate experience?

**1 Kings 19:9-10**

*And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*

Elijah felt alone, isolated, and betrayed. He enumerated before the LORD how his zeal for God had led him to accomplish great things for the LORD. However, he told God that even after all this, they still seek my life; nothing has changed, and nothing has turned in favor of the LORD's Kingdom. Elijah was hurt and oppressed due to the current situation and the nation's lack of response, not to mention God's lack of response to his work and stand.

Read: 1 Kings 19:11-16

What Elijah did not realize is that his mission was not finished. He was to anoint Jehu king over Israel. It was Jehu who then slew and destroyed Jezebel—mission accomplished!

Vs 19 shows us that Elijah submitted to God's will and direction. He rose from despair and responded to God's voice with action— not my will!