

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Haunting Experiences

By Steve Higginbotham

On July 7, 2011 the Oakland A's were playing the Texas Rangers. In the second inning, one of the A's hit a foul ball that went into the stands, and then bounced back onto the field. So as a friendly gesture, Rangers outfielder, Josh Hamilton picked up the ball and tossed it to a fan in the stands. Hamilton's toss was a little short, causing the man to lean over the railing in an attempt to catch the ball. Unfortunately, this caused the man to lose his balance, topple over the railing and fall head first to his death.

I can only imagine how badly Josh Hamilton feels. Although he intended no harm to this fan, his action resulted in the death of this man. As I have listened to the news reporters and sportscasters comment on this sad event over the weekend, I couldn't help but think of a

spiritual application. For how many times does this very thing happen in our homes and in our churches. How many fathers and mothers will make spiritual decisions that are not intended to harm their children, but they do that very thing. A period of "spiritual slumber" for mom and dad results in the unintended faithlessness of their children. Harsh words, judgmental attitudes, and a critical spirit unintentionally sours a child, spouse, or neighbor and they rebel against what they're told is "Christianity."

Friends, no man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself (Romans 14:7). We all influence other people for the better or for the worse. Give diligence to make sure that the choices you make in life don't have unintended consequences that will haunt you later.

A Godly Man in Wicked Surroundings

By Bill Hall

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Elijah was a man who reached true greatness in the Lord's service. He was always ready to go where God would send him (**I Kings 18:1; 19:15**); to pray whenever prayer was needed (**I Kings 17:20, 21; 18:36, 37**), and to confront evil whenever confrontation was necessary (**I Kings 18:17-24; 21:17-19**). He was translated without seeing death, and he, along with Moses, was chosen to appear with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration.

The remarkable thing about Elijah is that he attained this greatness while living in a wicked and hostile environment. Had he lived in Judah during the righteous reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, we might not be surprised at Elijah's attainments. But he lived instead in Israel during the wicked reign of Ahab. He was subjected to the cruel intents of Jezebel. He was under constant harassment and threat of death. He became so discouraged at one point that he asked to die, but he never denied his God.

In this wicked environment Elijah was able to influence others. The widow of Zarephath was blessed through Elijah (**I Kings 17:8-24**). The multitudes on Mount Carmel

were led to cry, "The Lord, He is God!" through his courageous efforts (**I Kings 18:39**). Elisha, his successor, must have been greatly influenced by him. And even Ahab was brought to humility on one occasion, clothing himself in sackcloth as a result of Elijah's rebuke (**I Kings 21:27-29**). The message of Elijah is clear. You can live a godly life and influence others for good in a wicked and hostile environment.

When one hears the excuses people make today, it is obvious that Elijah's message is badly needed in this generation. People excuse their failure to teach others the gospel with, "People are so prejudiced around here they just won't listen"; when the truth is, little effort has been made. If they are approached about their ungodly conduct, they explain that "You just don't know how terrible the people are that I have to work around every day". If their children go astray their explanation is, "Our children are faced with pressures that we didn't have growing up". Such statements, repeated often enough, become to many a "license" to do wrong and a salve to soothe their troubled consciences.

We must throw aside our excuses and make up our minds to do right. Elijah could serve God in wicked surroundings. And so can we.

The Valley of Vision

By An Unknown Puritan

Lord, high and holy,
meek and lowly, Thou hast
brought me to the valley of
vision, where I live in the depths,
but see Thee in the heights;
hemmed in by mountains of sin,
I behold Thy glory.

Let me learn by paradox
that the way down is the way up,
that to be low is to be high, that
the broken heart is the healed
heart, that the contrite spirit is
the rejoicing spirit, that the
repenting soul is the victorious
soul, that to have nothing is to
possess all, that to bear the
cross is to wear the crown, that
to give is to receive, that the
valley is the place of vision.

Lord, in the daytime
stars can be seen from deepest
wells, and the deeper the wells
the brighter thy stars shine; let
me find Thy light in my darkness,
Thy life in my death, Thy joy
in my sorrow, Thy grace in my
sin, Thy riches in my poverty,
Thy glory in my valley.

**Why cannot life's big
problems come when we
are twenty and know
everything?**

IS THIS OUR

PROBLEM?

Copied Statement

If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become ineffective in this world.
