

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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BIRTH OUT OF WEDLOCK

It has been stated by sociologists and psychologists that when a child is born out of wedlock it should not be called or classed as a bastard or a more pleasant word, "illegitimate child." It is the parents. The child is not responsible for his being here. There have been many outstanding educators and citizens born out of wedlock. But most of these persons are convicts and persons who fall in the category of the biggest problem cases in the communities where they reside. If you go back a little in the history of the illegitimate parents you will find they fall in the same category as the law of iniquity. For example: mother was a bright student in school and had to drop out in her junior or senior year in high school due to pregnancy. Her mother did likewise and this has been handed down from the first generation to the third and fourth generations. Mother can't tell the daughter anything, because in many cases the daughter speaks in a very unmannerly tone, "you are no better than I."

Illegitimate birth is an old tradition, always has been, is now, and shall ever be. On many occasions one may walk by a group of teen-age boys on the street corner boasting about the sex relations they have had with certain girls from families who are making every effort to educate them just as the boys' parents are making a sacrifice for their education. The boy has the advantage in these cases, for as he pulls the girl down as the old saying goes and she has to stop school he continue and graduates.

Women and girls have many weaknesses which they cannot help. It is up to an intelligent man to help her strive for a more valuable aim in life rather than to pull her down and boast about it. Sex is an illness which many females cannot resist unless she has a double determination to strive for something definite in life and knows that indulging in sex relations will be the chief handicap.

Illegitimate birth is not the only handicap derived from sex relations. Many of the different venereal diseases, even tuberculosis and cancer come from the illegal practice of sex relationship.

Sexual controls, should be emphasized to the young girl when she reaches puberty age. Parents, teachers, and Sunday school teachers should talk frankly with their children when they reach this stage of life if they desire to make a sacrifice for a more civilized education.

One shouldn't think anyone should rebuke the act of sex relationship when a person is properly married with love and affection and with no one else.

Around many of the public schools many boys and men meet their girl friends after school has been dismissed. Some of these men are married; knowing that the parents of these girls are at work, they carry them everywhere except home. Of course when their teacher visits the mother and tells her that her daughter can't remain in school any longer due to pregnancy it breaks her heart. On many occasions the father is a young married man but the girl places the blame on one of her young male classmates. This is due primarily to the fact that the young married man has more to offer them for their enjoyment. This is not only practiced in the public schools but the colleges as well.

When a young man asks for his first date with a lady of his choice of love and affection he is responsible for her conduct as long as he chooses her as his special companion and the same applies to the young lady.

The young lady should have the following under consideration when choosing her boy friend, no drinking, especially in public places, never take me to a bawdy house, "I will not sit in his lap while driving on the highways," no sex relationship before properly married. This is the type of girl he is looking for as a wife but when she yields to too many of these illegal requests he begins to find fault.

As to the young married couples, they should have thorough understanding of married life before going into it. First think about the children; no man should walk off and leave his wife without any support as is often the case and that not only applies to the man and wife but to

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE Beginning Where You Are

Most of us know the spiritual "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder." Persons who know little or nothing of the story of Jacob's "ladder vision" at Bethel have sung its simple verses and melody. This spiritual has a charm of its own that frequently brings a feeling of heaven's closeness.

These lyrics, which begin with "We are climbing Jacob's ladder" and end with "Soldiers of the cross," express the profound theological conviction of the church that God can bring spiritual changes in the lives of men. Jacob's change from deceiver to faithful soldier of the Lord can suggest the Christian's change from a life of self-caused alienation and fear to new life found in the redemptive reconciliation made available through the innocent suffering of the Messiah on the cross.

Every person needs at least one Bethel experience in his life in order that the faith of his fathers may become truly his own. Personal awareness of the reality of God's presence is necessary if biblical religion is to be a living source of comfort and strength. The Christian doctrine of the "witness of the Spirit" is suggested in Jacob's Bethel vision. It is the essential motivating element in the faith of the spiritual giants of biblical and church tradition.

Jacob fled his home in disgrace and fear. He was destined to return, some twenty years later, successful and blessed. His journey from the Promised Land to Mesopotamia and back again parallels the spiritual pilgrimage by which he was changed from a man of selfish drive to a man dedicated to God's will. He encountered God at Bethel and was empowered and guided for his time of exile and his subsequent return to his homeland.

Searching The Scriptures

The Scripture for this lesson is Genesis 27 and 28; 32; 46:1-3. Selected verses are printed below.

Genesis 27:18-24

18 So he went in to his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your first-born. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that you may bless me." 20 But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the Lord your God granted me success." 21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother

Esau's hands; so he blessed him. 24 He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am."

Genesis 28:11-17

11 And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; 14 and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you." 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it." 17 And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Genesis 46:1-3

1 So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here am I." 3 Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation."

Memory Selection: Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

—John 3:3

Exploring The Questions

Two preliminary but important questions one should always ask in a study of the Bible are these: (1) What is the source of the material for the study, (2) What is the purpose of the author or authors in telling it? How does it fit into the scheme of covenant-promise religion?

The biblical story suggests that the fugitive Jacob was depressed, remorseful, and lonely. What he had desired and, by collusion with his mother, had obtained must have seemed all in vain. He had coveted and won Esau's birthright and his father's benediction. But he had also received his brother's vengeful animosity. What good was the birthright and its promises of privilege if Jacob were far removed from the inheritance? What value was his father's religion if the God of his father

and the Promised Land were left behind?

A person of our culture may think it strange to take a stone and use it as a pillow for one's head. Is there any significance to Jacob's action in doing this?

Does the Scripture intend to say that Jacob bargained with God? According to Genesis 28:20-22, after his ladder vision, Jacob made a vow to this effect: "If God will be with me and preserve me, giving me food and clothes, and bring me back to my father's house in peace (no small wish!) then I shall serve the Lord as my God and give back a tenth of all I shall receive to his service." Does this story justify generous gifts to the service of God promised on condition that God shall render some blessing in return?

On his return home, before he met Esau, Jacob encountered the Lord, or an angel, and wrestled with him. The struggle of that experience resulted in a change of name from Jacob to Israel. What is the meaning of this encounter? What is the significance of the new name God gave to Jacob?

Finding Help

With Your Questions

Genesis 28:10 connects directly with Genesis 27:45, and the account is basically from the Yahwist's document. Some significant details from the E source are cleverly inserted and interwoven with the Yahwist's story. For example, verses 12, 17-18, and 20-21a, 22 of Genesis 28 are surely from the E tradition. This blending of J (Yahwist) and E traditions accounts for some of the repetitious and the alternation of "God" and "the Lord" (Yahweh) in reference to deity.

Note also that "God" speaks to Jacob by means of a dream and angels and that "the Lord" stands beside Jacob and speaks to him directly. The former mode of communication from deity to mortals is common to E; the latter, to J.

Flight to Haran

In the epic drama of the Yahwist (J author), Jacob's journey to Haran was an essential part of the divine plan for the fulfillment of the covenant promises to Abraham. Jacob, like many individuals, did not recognize that his life was proceeding according to God's will and under divine protection and control. But the reader sees that Jacob's safety and future were vitally related to the religion the Lord had initiated with his grandfather and confirmed in his father. His life was part of God's design for creation.

Desolate and homeless, Jacob was overwhelmed by his sordid past. The future looked bleak with uncertainty. That he had not even food and clothing for the simplest existence is evident from Jacob's response to the Bethel vision. In essence, he said, "Let God protect me on this journey (it was extremely dangerous to travel alone, on foot, over wilderness and desert) and give me bread to eat and clothing to wear (these were the two necessary and legal issues made to slaves and servants)." (See Genesis 28:20.)

Thus it was out of the depths

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the illegitimate parents as well. This is slow murder. They should think of the first law of nature, food, shelter and clothing. One should think of his child as flesh of his flesh, bones of his bones and blood of his blood. One should not eat and support himself and allow his children to suffer. This should include education, recreation, religion and obeying the laws of the court. The child cannot do it unless the parents set an example.