

Beacons of the Bible

Ishmael Cast Out

By [Henry Law](#)

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But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." Genesis 21:9-10

Sinners may revel, but their day is very brief. Thorns crackle with high blaze, and quickly subside in ashes. The godless laughter is the prelude of long wailing. The morn soon fades--the evening shadows fall--the night comes on apace--the night which knows no dawn. The Spirit sounds the knell of short-lived evil--"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be--yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Ps. 37:10.

Thus Ishmael's malicious sport soon ends. Sarah's watchful eye detects. The persecutor may not tarry. The sneer--the taunt--the petty tyranny must cease. Isaac shall no more dread the banter or the blow. The teasings, which were pain to the meek child, shall no more trouble. The mother demands immediate expulsion, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son." The patriarch hears God's confirming voice. He instantly complies. The young oppressor is driven far away.

Thus speaks the narrative. It is an outer bark--when it peels off, the rings of inner meaning are discerned. These rings are many. Each is a wealth of thought. But the intermediate fulfillments of the type are but as lesser lights before a final blaze. Through, then, the long perspective, let us at once approach the close. Let the eye rest alone on the ultimate conclusion. The consummation is an eternal gulf between the children of the covenant of works and heirs of grace. This consummation comes--it surely comes--it quickly comes. Angels are ready to sound the final blast. Listening ears are waiting for the trumpet's clang. At any moment it may shake the universe. Then all, who have breathed life's breath, must take their place. Each must hear, "Come," or "Depart." Each must have a blessed welcome or be cast out.

Reader! be wise. Anticipate the dread result. Live, as did Jerome, with this trumpet's echo always in your ears. In envisioning thought, then, let the white throne be set--let the all-righteous Judge be seated--let the recording books be

opened--let all, who ever lived, stand at the bar--let him who writes--let all who lead, face the account, and meet the last day's scene.

Now sovereign Justice reins. Truth spreads revealing light. All masks now fall. Deception vanishes. Hypocrisy can no more deceive. The worse can no more seem the better cause.

The sons of the Sinaitic code expect eternal life. On what plea? They have no plea but their own merits--their fulfillment of the law's demands. But the record of their days is continuous sin. Are these doings a portion of obedience? What are these passions--lusts--rebellious acts? What is the evil, which has soiled each hour, and stained each thought, and stamped transgression on the whole life's course! Guilt cannot be denied. Excuse there can be none. The law's reward has not been earned--what is the inevitable outcome? The curse must fall. Justice condemns. There is vast debt. No payment can be made. Then what can stop the sentence, "Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness." Matt. 22:12-13.

The executioners are ready. The cell is prepared. The chains are forged. The jailer receives his convicted prisoners. Transgressors are cast out. This is faint outline of the end. Scripture portrays it in these dreadful colors, that men may ponder and take heed. Reader! you can never say that clearest warning is not given.

CAST OUT FROM WHAT? There is now a long farewell to earth, and all that earth contains. Through life's short day unnumbered mercies strewed each path. The sun shone sweetly. The fanning breezes wafted delight. The groves re-echoed with the warbler's melody. The verdant meadows spread their soft carpet. Flowers charmed with fragrance. Fruits regaled with varied lusciousness. The outcasts no more taste these pleasures. The cup has fallen from their hand. Earth is forever gone.

There was much happiness in communion with fellow-man. The lively talk--the mirth of social hours--the friendly interchange of thought enchanted the vacant time. No friend will now be seen. The last smile has been smiled. The last enlivening word has died away.

Ordinances of religion brought some tranquil hours, although no saving profit. These privileges come no more. No chimes invite to worship. No sacred Scriptures tell of God's gracious will. No preacher proclaims Christ. No pulpit declares His dying love--His precious blood--His rising power--His willingness to save--His promise to receive all seekers of His grace. The Gospel's last note has sunk in silence. No returning Sabbaths bring repose. No sacred song gives solace. "Come to me" will never more be heard.

O my soul, see to it, that you are not cast out.

Hope, also, at last is fled. It often came and whispered soothing things. It showed a glimmering prospect of penitence--amendment--pardon. It flattered, 'all may yet be well.' Where is hope now? It vanished with the yell, "Too late--too late!" It is transformed into despair.

Need I say, there is the absence of those lovely sights which cheer the mansions of the saved. No angels spread their sparkling wings around. No white-robed multitudes glitter with their crowns. No Christ is seen. No God reveals His glory. There is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1:9.

O my soul, see to it, that you are not cast out.

All this is doleful gloom. But this is only negative. Absence of joy may not be agonizing pain. But a dreadful veil must be drawn back. Scripture sounds a more frightful note. It speaks in tender compassion--to warn, that we may flee--to urge, that we may escape the wrath to come. Reader! look yet again, and may the look be your salvation.

Is darkness dismal--cheerless--disconsolate--a fit emblem of ignorance, misery, and filth? Over these realms an impenetrable pall of blackness, of darkness forever hangs. The darkness is so black, that blackness cannot be blacker.

Is weeping a sign of wretchedness and woe? Here is weeping never ceasing to shed tears. Is wailing the bitter utterance of irrepressible distress? Here wailing is an ever-echoing wail.

Does gnashing of teeth betray the upbraidings of remorse? Is it the sign of self-hating reproach? Here gnashing of teeth is unremitting. Is there keen torture in the worm, that ever gnaws and never leaves its prey? Here the worm dies not. Does fire indicate extremest agony? is it pain in most excruciating form? This fire is never quenched. The lost writhe terribly on beds of flame. They float in lakes of fire. Do they crave one drop of water to cool tongues parched in agony? It may not be. A portion is presented to them--who can read and tremble not! "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb." Rev. 14:10.

What must that misery be, which the omnipotence of God puts forth all its might to intensify! No thought can imagine. No tongue can utter. But such the misery which groans in these dreadful dwellings. It is an dreadful word, "He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Rev. 19:15. If this were solitary anguish, it still would be anguish in the extreme. But the misery is multiplied by the wide fellowship of partners. On all sides there is companionship of woe. The eye can only rest on others in like torments. The ear can only hear

the wails of fellow-sufferers.

Shall it be said that these descriptions are shadowed out in figurative terms? Let it be granted. But what is gained by such concession? The Spirit cannot exaggerate or overpaint. The reality will not be fainter than the picture scene. No, rather language fails to show the total truth. No painting can depict the fire's touch, or show the serpent's deadly sting, or indicate the lion's rage. So no word-painting can fully show the misery of the lost. O my soul, see to it, that you are not cast out!

But pains may patiently be born if reprieve gilds the horizon, or ease be seen in the distance. But there the tide ever flows at fullest height, and cessation never comes. Millions of years bring no end nearer, and millions succeeding millions is but commencement of interminable woe. There is one constant present, and that present is overflowing cup of torment. O my soul, see to it, that you are not cast out!

But when Ishmael is cast, out, the true heir remains. To this woe there is bright contrast. Look to the right hand of the Judge. The sheep of His pasture are there folded. The children of the covenant of grace await the outcome. Their cruel adversary exhibits all their sins. He establishes their guilt. He demands their full punishment. They deny no charge. But they present a plea for acceptance. It is simple, but unanswerable. Their plea is Christ. Their lives show that by the Spirit's power faith became the inhabitant of their hearts. This faith united them to Christ. It made them very members of Him their glorious Head. Thus, all His sufferings were their sufferings. All His work was their work. In Him they died. In Him they paid the law's extremest penalty. In Him they wrought out complete obedience. None can lay anything to their charge. Christ's death is full acquittal. Christ's life is a spotless robe concealing every sin. They ask no mitigation of the law's just claims. But they ask life and heaven on the sure grounds that Jesus is the law-fulfiller. They prevail. "God is just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. They have full right to all which Jesus earned and purchased. They receive it. The accuser is silenced. They hear the welcome, "Come you blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. Theirs are the "new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness." 2 Pet. 3:13.

Reader! in thought behold them in their blest abode. Holy Spirit! in tender love illumine the picture which Your Word presents! The realms are bright in one expanse of light. Are the sun's rays lovely? But these rays are darkness to this light. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21:23. On earth their eyes were oftentimes charmed with scenes of beauty. But what is the best beauty of a sin-soiled world compared to the charms which now invest their homes! *How glorious are the abodes which infinite love and power have prepared!* "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2.

To believers earth is the home of many griefs. The body often droops in languor. Racking pains harass the frame. Hunger and thirst afflict. Tears furrow the cheek. Sighs cause the breast to heave. But the whole mass of sorrow is now abolished. They hunger no more. They thirst no more. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Is. 33:24. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain--for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4. O my soul, see to it, that you inherit the kingdom.

On earth, temptation makes days bitter. There are constant groans from "the body of this death." "The law of the members wars against the law of the mind." "The flesh lusts against the spirit." Inbred corruptions soil every act, and banish peace and awaken self-aborrence. Now there is freedom from all the presence--all the touch--and all the sense of evil. The Spirit can never be more vexed. Ingratitude and unbelief are totally extinct. The redeemed are as holy as God is holy. They are as pure as Jesus is pure. They are as far from sin as heaven is from hell.

The travelers along the narrow way are often desolate. Their friends are few. They rarely enjoy holy fellowship. Their dwellings are in loneliness. But now what multitudes surround them! All rejoicing in the same joy--all clothed in the same robes--all singing the same song--all breathing the same love--all washed in the same blood--all ascribing their full salvation to God and to the Lamb. Blessed company! They sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, apostles, evangelists, and the noble army of martyrs, and the valiant body of reformers, and all who ever loved, and served, and gloried in the blessed Jesus! O my soul, see to it, that you inherit the kingdom!

The greatest solace in life is the felt presence of Jesus. It is the joy of joys to hear His voice in the Word, and to catch a glimpse of His smile. But mists intervene. The bride seeks Him, but she finds Him not. In heaven there never can be separation. Eternity is uninterrupted access to Him. There is no eclipse to the sight of the King in His beauty. The redeemed follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They walk with Him in white. They eat and drink at His table in His kingdom. They are forever with the Lord. The *thought* is too much for earth. What must the *consummation* be!

O my soul, see to it, that you inherit the kingdom.

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