

## Beacons of the Bible

Rebekah

By [Henry Law](#)

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"Upon me be your curse, my son." Genesis 27:13

God's Word is a rich treasure. The value reaches its pinnacle, when we believe surely that each sentence is the Spirit's gift. Proofs of this are large and perfect. But there are incidental evidences of the Bible's truthfulness, which are of wondrous worth. These should be diligently sought and dearly prized. They add stability to faith. Among these transparent honesty is not the least. The characters, moving across its stage, are not arrayed in unreal robes. They are not exhibited in imagination's garbs. They shine not in fictitious beauty. They soar not above the level of mortality. They appear as men and women born in the family of a fallen race. As we read, we feel this story is truth's record. An inventive pen would probably have decked the patriarchs in superhuman excellence. They would be shown as almost gods on earth. At least, no failings would be made conspicuous. Their walk would not be stumbling. No falls would soil their robes with mire. But the plain candor of the Book depicts them as they really were. Thus Abraham errs and errs again. He stoops to low subterfuges, which heroes of a fabulous romance would scorn. Isaac follows, and in a life of calm repose betrays, that, with his father's grace, he had his father's faults.

Rebekah, partner of his deceit at Gerar, conspires to deceive her husband, well in age. Jacob's career is foul with dishonest subtleties. These are indisputable marks of a true narrative.

These sins, also, stand out prominently as signals. They prove how surely Satan will assail God's sons--that no high walk is higher than his shafts can reach--that no heart is so armed with grace as to be invulnerable to his wiles. They cry, 'let saints beware of grievous falls.' They warn, as rocks against which many a gallant vessel has perilously dashed--as quicksands entangling the unsuspecting crew--as vipers lurking in a verdant path--as foes concealed in secret ambush--as pitfalls in the upward road. These are monuments proclaiming the foe's triumphs and man's weakness. We read in them, "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity"--Ps. 39:5. They endear, also, that precious blood, in which the believer washes his every act--his every word--his every thought. Then the stains become white, yes, whiter than the newly fallen snow.

Thus we approach Rebekah's grievous sin. Old age, with stealthy step, has overtaken Isaac. Decrepitude prevails. The keen eye is dim. Objects are involved in mist. The sight is clouded in imperfection.

Reader! become familiar with the inward sight of Christ. Live gazing with rapturous faith on the Invisible. He will not withdraw, when outward sense decays. His countenance most brightly shines, when need is greatest. Darkening nature intercepts not heavenly rays.

The sightless Isaac thinks of his earthly end. The priestly office is his right. He must discharge it, and pronounce the priestly blessing.

We see the type of Jesus. He came to bless. He lived to bless. As the true High Priest He ascends with blessings falling from His lips. "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them." Luke 24:50. Happy the parent, who bequeaths a legacy of blessing! Happy children, who receive the rich inheritance of blessing!

Good and holy is Isaac's wish to bless. Self-willed--presumptuous--ungodly is his resolve to bless him, whom God had not blessed. His heart disposed him to prefer his eldest, Esau. The venison pleased the palate. But he had heard God's clear decree, "The elder shall serve the younger." In his own case the elder, Ishmael, had been put aside. He knew, also, that Jacob had obtained the birthright. But paternal fondness tempts him, and he strives against Divine arrangement.

Esau is sent forth in haste to kill the deer--to dress the dainty dish, and then to kneel before the blessing patriarch. When will vain man learn to bow in reverence before God's counsels? If He decrees, not all the wisdom of the wise--not all the shrewdness of the shrewd--not all the cunning of the crafty--not all the might of the most mighty can negate--"From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can oppose what I do. No one can reverse my actions." Isaiah 43:13. If He speaks, result is sure. All power is His. All creatures are instruments to execute His will. This truth is engraven on the marvelous sequel. Dark lines proclaim man's grievous errors, and God's prevailing mind.

Rebekah overhears the patriarch's converse. She marks the speed of Esau to the field. Uneasiness assails her startled mind. What! shall the paternal blessing rest on Esau's head! What! shall he thus be raised in power and dignity above Jacob! Can I prevent? Yes. There is time. The means are mine. The means, indeed, are artifice and deceit; but they will help the destined end.

She reasons--she resolves--she half persuades herself, that sin is no sin, and deceit no deceit, if ultimate good shall be the issue.

Alas! how blinding is the devil's power! How tremendous is his skill to smooth the downward path! How easily he dresses evil in the garb of right! He insinuates the falsehood,

"that ends may sanctify the means--that no plan can be wrong, by which right is subserved."

Rebekah's willing steps are snared. She quickly finds Jacob. Success depends upon speediness. *How many fall, because there is no pause for thought.* Reflection oftentimes brings escape. She relates her husband's purpose. She states her plot to outwit. Who will not tremble, when they see a mother tempting, and a son entrapped? The wary Jacob at first hesitates. He scruples, not because the deceit is hateful to his soul--not because he loathes the crime of cheating an aged parent--not because of impious presumption in diverting God's purposes from their own channel--but lest *detection* should unmask him--lest failure should ensue--lest, discovered by natural unlikeness to his brother, he should not only lose the blessing, but should be blasted by a curse. He hates not the sin, because it is sin; but he mistrusts it, lest it should not prosper. He will embrace the viper, if it has no latent sting.

Rebekah, intent to carry out her scheme, presents her head to bear the curse. The dreadful words are heard, "Upon me be your curse, my son--Help me, and if sufferings come they shall be mine." She persists, reckless of the future. How truly is *sin's path a rapid rushing down a steep descent!*

No further hesitation checks. The treacherous project progresses. The goats are slain. The savory food is prepared. Jacob is masked in clothing not his own. His hands are roughened by the skins of goats. His neck is similarly disguised. Thus he draws near. His lips tremble, "My father." Isaac, surprised at the quick return, replies, "Here am I--who are you, my son?" Then the bold lie is heard, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing." Genesis 27:19. Alas! that words so false should fearlessly be uttered! When once the sluice is opened, impetuous torrents have resistless course. A small spark falls, and wide-spread conflagration blazes. Lies must be hid by lies. Truth's path forsaken can hardly be regained. *Sin speeds with lightning speed.*

The father marvels and, inquires, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" How daring is impiety! The holy name of God is now brought in to bolster up the fraud, "Because the Lord your God brought it to me." The cautious parent desires evidence, that Esau is before him. His eyes help not. But he desires to test by feeling. The skins deceive. But still the voice betrays. Therefore the clear question is clearly put, "Are you my very son Esau." Genesis 27:24.

Ah! what a moment! Will he persist in this unfilial treachery? Will he add sin to sin? Will he upraise the topstone to this pyramid of evil? Will he lay darker colors

on this base iniquity? Will not his heart relent? Will he not loathe his vileness and retract? Ah! no. The barrier is crossed. He rushes onward. "Are you my very son Esau? and he said, I am." The father, no longer doubtful, eats of the food, and drinks of the offered goblet. He invites his child to the paternal caress, "Come near now, and kiss me my son." His heart is cheered. His spirit is revived. In flow of glowing language he heaps the mightiest blessings on the deceiver's head-- Genesis 27:28, 29.

Still, Gods purposes prevail. The blessing was decreed to Jacob. On Jacob it fully falls. Thus in a dense maze of human evil, heaven's plan is furthered. There is much to perplex and to distress, but one fact remains intact. God must be true. No vileness on man's part can intercept the current of his settled plans. The mother's hateful sin is not the less--sin must be sin, whatever be the motive and result; but *sin, however grievous, will form no barrier to God's arrangement.*

In after days, when God's pity planned relief to the parched sons of Israel, Moses received direct command to take his rod, and to speak to the rock before their eyes. It was promised that the yielding stone should pour forth streams obedient to the *voice*. Moses impatiently adopts his own course. He follows the angry dictates of his own course. He is not content to act submission. He *smites* the rock. He smites it twice. He speaks, moreover, but in terms of passion, to the rebel people. Thus Moses sinned. But will his sin hold back the destined mercy? Will the camp lose the blessing? No. God's pity is still pitiful. The waters flow. The thirsty are refreshed. But Moses must bear his sin. His feet shall never tread the promised land. Bye-ends intercept not Jacob's promised blessings.

Reader! take warning. *Leave God to work His will in His own way.* Take not the rudder from His hand. Anticipate not; but meekly follow. His ways are always right. So is His time always the best. "If the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Hab. 2:3. If Samuel lingers, let not Saul usurp his office. To wait is wisdom. Impatience frets to evil. Tear up each root of doubt. The noxious weed will quickly spread, and raise a crop of trouble.

If Rebekah had meekly paused--if in submissive patience she had calmly left the matter to her God, the blessing would have been most sure. Her conscience would have received no wound. Following troubles would not have saddened her last days. Now what sorrows come! Esau, enraged at the deceit, proclaims his purpose to slay the supplanter. He only pauses until death closes the eyes of Isaac. He thinks the time is very near. "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." Genesis 27:41.

The affrighted mother plans to remove her much-loved son. She hurries him beyond the reach of murderous design. She counsels him to flee to Laban. She thinks the absence will be brief. "Tarry with him a few days, until your brother's fury turn away." Genesis 27:44, but were the days few? He wears out weary years in hard service. Aged Rebekah must lie down and die. In her decline no

son is near to cheer. Her dying eye rests not on the beloved face. His voice soothes not. He is far off. He has indeed the blessing; but the mother sees him no more. If she had fully trusted God, how joyous might her last hours have been!

Jacob deceives; but frauds pursue him. In the house of Laban he is the victim of a wily scheme. In his declining years his sons conspire to cheat him. He had used the skins of goats to delude, so the blood of goats is used to mislead him-- Then Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped the robe in its blood. They took the beautiful robe to their father and asked him to identify it. "We found this in the field," they told him. "It's Joseph's robe, isn't it?" Their father recognized it at once. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal has attacked and eaten him. Surely Joseph has been torn in pieces!" Genesis 37:31-33.

It is a solemn word, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Numb. 32:23.

Sometimes the scourge proclaims its mission. The punishment bears inscription of the offence. It tells loudly the evoking cause. In her son's death the conscious mother saw deserved wrath. "Are you come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" 1 Kings 17:18. Adonibezek, maimed as he had maimed others, piteously wails, "As I have done, so God has requited me." Judges 1:7. Mark the end of Jezebel. She had caused dogs to lick the blood of Naboth, and in the self-same place her blood is licked by dogs. David sins foully, and foul evil soon pollutes his house. He sins in resolving boastfully to parade his nation's numbers. Immediately a pestilence sweeps seventy thousand of his subjects from the earth. Haman plots Mordecai's death. A lofty gallows is upraised. Who is the victim? Who dies there in ignominy? The king, enraged with Haman, issues the mandate, "Hang Haman thereon." Esther 7:9.

There is a guilty church, drunk with the blood of saints. What is the cup which it must shortly drain? It is the cup of blood. "You are just in sending this judgment, O Holy One, who is and who always was. For your holy people and your prophets have been killed, and their blood was poured out on the earth. So you have given their murderers blood to drink. It is their just reward." Rev. 16:5-6.

Reader! be wise. Seek only to know God's will. Strive only to walk in His way. *In devious paths misery lurks.* Happy the walk when holy means conduce to holy ends! Let God's commands be our one motive--His word our rule--His Spirit our guide--His glory our aim. So only can we hear the glad welcome, "Well done!"

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