

PEACE ON EARTH

(from front page)

A part of "The Lord's Prayer" would have us say to God, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Those words signify willing, thorough and constant submission to God. **Whatever heaven is to be like, "The Lord's Prayer" says it is to start here on earth!** Those going to heaven will be those who give a big "YES" for God to have full right of way in every aspect of their lives, here and now.

But this "will of God" is to be "done" on the national level, too! **This is why God used Jehu.** And though God doesn't always work the same way, He *does* work for the same end: **"PEACE ON EARTH, good will to men!"** It goes from *personal*, to *national* to *global*, AND it is to start here and now!

Jehu cut no corners in fulfilling "God's will" of eliminating the evil of the ruling national leaders. In fact, he went further, and eliminated well-entrenched, idolatrous Baal worship, too! **But Jehu didn't take care of Jehu!** His words to his friend in the next chapter show his self-exalting pride; showing off his "zeal for the Lord!" He executed thorough judgment...but then took up the evil ways of one of the most notorious and idolatrous past leaders in that country! Did Jehu think, like so many others, that he "did more good than bad," and therefore God would accept him?

Jehu would not accept the offer of peace, so long as those other evil people filled the nation with sin. **Yet Jehu wanted to allow his own brand of sin** in the nation. But God will never accept "peace" on any other terms but purity!

The angelic message of "peace on earth, good will to men," (Lk. 2:14) was inseparable from the announcement to

Mary's husband, Joseph: "And you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people FROM their sins!" (Matt. 1:21). God's peace to men comes only by way of holiness of heart and life. This same fact applies on the individual level, as well as the national and global level.

There can be no true communion and peace with God, so long as man holds on to sin of any sort. Wherever there is compromise with evil, "there is no peace, says the Lord, to the wicked!" (Isa. 48:22; 57:21). **A person may not SEEM hostile** toward God, yet if that person has not sought, and totally surrendered to God, there can be no peace with God (Rom. 8:7). That person is simply a part of "the wicked" by default, as well as by birth.

Isaiah the prophet recorded these words foretelling the coming Messiah-Saviour: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and PEACE there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9: 6,7).

Jehu boasted of his zeal FOR the Lord. Isaiah's words, above, tell of the **zeal OF the Lord**...that is, what God Himself would perform through Jesus. In a real way, **Jehu's government** was no better than that of those he destroyed. Isaiah's words tell us of the **Government of God**, which brings **PEACE**. Crown Jesus King of your life. Let Him bring peace in this nation, and on to all the world...starting with you. **"PEACE ON EARTH, good will to men"..."AS IT IS IN HEAVEN!"**

Christ came to die for our sins. Bethlehem's Babe became the Christ of the Cross. Jesus instituted "The Lord's Supper" like God instituted marriage. Both relate to sacred union. Both suffer abuse. Abuse can & does occur during The Lord's Supper by people "not discerning the Lord's body" (see 1 Cor. 11: 23-32). Similarly at Christmas, the vast majority don't discern...or maybe even desire to know & embrace the Christ of Christmas & His salvation. The Christmas song asks: "WHO IS HE... In the Cattle Manger? In the Communion Meal? On the Cross Mount? DISCERN, DESIRE, DELIGHT...DECLARE!



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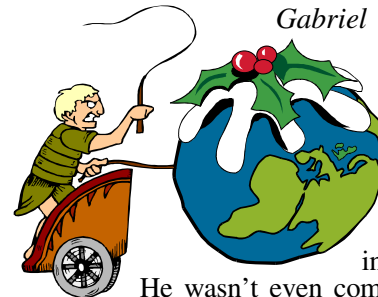
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"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor. Printing in London since 1983
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Peace on Earth?

Gabriel Mancino



Jehu drove like a maniac! He was NOT competing in Le Mans.

He wasn't even competing for a **Christmastime parking place** at Brent Cross Shopping Centre. So, what was his "road rage" all about?

The Bible record of the birth of Jesus is centred in the message of peace. This is what "Christmas" is supposed to be about, right? **Jehu** was repeatedly approached with a message of peace, but he rejected it each time, and kept driving "furiously." **He had good reason.**

This ugly part in Jehu's life is seen in 2 Kings 9... a record of killing, which had been foretold by God's prophets. The birth of Jesus was similar in that a horrible scene of foretold death surrounded it, as

well (see Jeremiah 31:15). The difference was that Jehu was used by God to bring swift and thorough judgment upon the sins of Israel and its leadership family. The infamous name, "Jezebel," comes from this story. She was the queen.

In the account of Jesus' birth, however, **King Herod had no reason** but insane jealousy to kill all those children in Bethlehem and the surrounding area (Matt. 2:16). He had heard of the long-promised "Messiah-King of Israel," and wanted no one... *not even God*... to rival or remove his authority and power. **The angels announced "peace on earth, good will to men"** to the shepherds of Bethlehem. With someone like King Herod around, how could this promised peace occur?

On Christmas Day, 1863, during the American Civil War, the great poet, Henry W. Longfellow, wrote lines which became the beautiful Christmas song, *I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day*. That war-time poem sadly admits that "**hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men.**" Nevertheless, the poem still ends with the victory of God's **PEACE!**

(continued on back page)

Jeremy Taylor wrote Holy Living in 1650, & Holy Dying in 1651— favourites of Methodism founder, John Wesley. At Jesus' birth, Simeon displayed holy living AND holy dying! (See Lk. 2:25-35). God's Holy Spirit in his life, informs & guides him in preparation for the birth of the Messiah. Holding the Babe, Simeon prays: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in PEACE, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring clear revealing... and the glory!" He was ready to go...ready to meet God. Wesley said of the early Methodists, even amid fierce persecution: "Our people die well!" Such PEACE...for life and for death...is the greatest gift of all! As Christ's return gets ever closer, be another Simeon! What PEACE!!



A Different CHRISTMAS Madness

Gabriel L. Mancino



others through the centuries, and up to today... **drove** in the opposite direction. **WHY?** The answer: "*for rewards*," plain and simple (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11).

Here is a man that God used wonderfully, and yet he chased after earthly rewards that his heart desired most. He gambled and lost. **It doesn't matter how you**

throw the dice... straight from your hand, under your leg, behind your back, over your head...in *this* gamble with your soul, you lose if your heart chases "*other things!*" (Mk. 4:19; 8:36,37).

Balaam was as determined in *his* course, as were the "*wise men*." But, oh, what a difference! Jehu, on page one, "*drove furiously*." So did Balaam. I imagine Jehu whipped the animal that pulled his chariot. I *know* Balaam beat his donkey unmercifully. **Balaam didn't realise that the donkey could see what Balaam could NOT see...** that an angel of God stood in the way to kill Balaam with a sword. The donkey went this way and that way to "awaken" Balaam, avoid the angel and save his master's life! **The donkey finally collapsed** in a tight place, simply because it couldn't go elsewhere. In fierce anger, Balaam said that he wished he had a sword to kill the donkey!

Many think God should get personally involved in this world, not realising that He *does!* More times than we can imagine, God has involved Himself in this way and that way, trying to divert people from their evil and determined course. **There is no telling how much good could be done in this present world, if people would stop beating the donkey!**

Peter says "*the voiceless donkey spoke with a man's voice and restrained the madness of the prophet*" (2 Pet. 2:16). Peter had first-hand experience that God can use an animal to bring conviction! The rooster crowed while Peter swore and repeatedly denied knowing Jesus (Matt. 26:75).

Balaam was a madman, but remember why! No doubt he was clever in many ways, and he was obviously used of God (like Jehu on page 1). But, like Jehu, it doesn't even matter how religious you are...or *appear to be...*, if you refuse to seek and find this King,

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and let Him rule in every part of your life, then you are like this man, Balaam.

Balaam's prophecy speaks of **the Star** and **the Sceptre**, but also of total defeat of God's enemies through the Promised One. Those "enemies" are represented by the names of Moab, Edom (Seir) and the children of Sheth, but not restricted to *them*, nor to the times of Balaam or of King David, later. For example, **King Herod, who spoke with the "wise men" and wished to kill the Christ-Child, was an Edomite himself.** Spiritual madness has various forms. A later Herod, out of mocking curiosity, wanted Jesus to perform miracles. He received nothing, but silence (Lk. 23:8,9). So this hatred of Christ's rivalry went from Balaam's time to Herod's time, and still exists today. Psalm 2 (quoted in Acts 4:25,26) speaks about the world confederacy "*against the Lord and against His Christ*," **AND** that this anti-Christ, anti-God united nations will be defeated.

Various Bibles use different words to describe the complete defeat of these enemies. Some, like the NIV, have "*He will crush the foreheads of Moab; the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.*" **That seemingly horrible statement is, in fact, the most wonderful Christmas present in the world! Here's why...**

Long before "Balaam's prophecy," was God's first ray of light of the coming Saviour. Correct!— God promised **ONE** Messiah: **the One born in Bethlehem!** In that first "promise," God said to the serpent/Devil, "*And I will put enmity [war!] between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall crush your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*" (Gen. 3:15).

In Galatians 3:16 this term, "*seed of the woman*," refers exclusively to the promised Messiah-Christ. On the Cross Jesus was "bruised," but the head of the serpent was crushed! A serpent's poison is in its head. This is God's promise to crush Satan **AND** his poison (SIN!), through Jesus on the Cross. This is why **the angel Gabriel announced** to Mary's husband, Joseph, "*and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people FROM their sins!*" **You can call this Christ's Christmas-Cross Crush!**

The "bruising" Passion of Christ involved His actual death, and was foretold, for example, Isa. 52:13-53:12, notably 53:5, 10. Balaam's prophecy of Satan's crushed head through Christ was accomplished at the **greatest expense** and the **greatest shame**.

Christ purposely came to that long-foretold "prepared body," embracing the Father's will with "delight" (Heb. 10, especially v.5-10). The Cross brought **shame and joy** to Christ (Heb. 12:2). The "**shame**" was the disgraceful cross itself. The "**joy**" was doing the Father's will. Balaam desired "**REWARD**," and **sought it madly**. But so did Jesus! Jesus "madly," passionately focused on that One Goal: Pleasing the Father by setting man free.

Freeing mankind from sin is **the greatest present the world could ever imagine**. Think of the effect of such deliverance, if applied at every level, every branch, every part of society... the home, religion, government, education, and so on. No lying, cheating, corruption, abuse, hatred, immorality, etc., and where any harm *IS* done, it is swiftly, honestly and humbly corrected. You might expect such morality in heaven, but God expects it *here and now*. Remember (see back page)? Jesus taught us to pray to the Father: "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!*" (Matt. 6:10).

Balaam spoke of **the Star** out of Jacob (i.e. Israel). The "*wise men*" followed **that Star**, and found **the King**. Nothing deterred those "*wise men*" from finding the Promised Messiah. **But not even his time-proven servant-donkey could stop this madman from seeking what HE wanted, either!** Sin is so blinding...and binding!

Physical restraint is no cure for this Balaam-like madness—such is the power of sin! The naked madman that met Jesus could not be bound with chains (Mk. 5; Lk.8:26). Jesus freed him completely...and gave him chains of love (Mk. 5:18)! **Balaam's madness** differed only in appearance. Like the man in Romans 7, Balaam could have cried out: "*Oh miserable man that I am! Who will deliver me from the inward sinful corruption at work within me?!*" Jesus said that *HE* sets a people free *indeed!* (Jn. 8:36 with Rom. 8:2 & Gal. 5:1). **THIS** is the reason Jesus came to this world: to deliver people from sin. **There is no greater gift** than God-given freedom from sin!

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.