

A LORRY-LOAD OF BENEFITS



Gabriel L. Mancino

Untold centuries of war have seen Psalm 68 quoted. No Bible chapter was used more during WW1 except, perhaps, for Psalm 46. Ps. 68 shows God "warring" in behalf of His people, and giving them victory. Yet, God is not seen here *delighting* in war, nor is this "song" a praising of war!

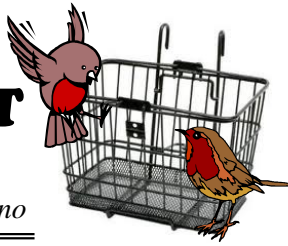
Verse 30 says that God "scatters the people that delight in war." God's purpose is to end war! Ps. 46:9 agrees. War simply provides corporations and those behind them with their biggest profits!

"Profits?" Ha! Ps. 68:19 says that God "DAILY loads us with BENEFITS!" That verse calls God "the God of our salvation," then adds the word: "Selah," meaning "Think of that!" The God of salvation, or of "saving," is not just saving people from self-caused trouble! The greatest salvation linking God to man is salvation from all sin.

God's "benefits system" cannot be "milked" like the British one, except by those who receive and remain in this salvation. The previous verse (v.18) identifies "the Bank," so to speak, from which the benefits are drawn: the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ! And the greatest Gift or Benefit poured out to man is God's Holy Spirit, as Peter says at Pentecost (Acts 2:33, and Paul says later, quoting the Psalm directly, in Eph. 4:8.

God's benefits are practical, even "in the real world," and God's lorry is not empty. This world and its system thrive on empty and groundless appearances. 1 Tim 4:8 and 2 Pet. 1:3 show God's concern for our present life and godliness, and for us to have well-founded hope and assurance in view of eternity. Now, THAT'S A Lorry-Load of Benefits!

A BASKET CASE



Gabriel L. Mancino

I love English robins! They come so close when I'm out gardening; once even perching on my shovel handle. My fondness of them is stronger for their association with Christmas, for I love Christmas, too! I still listen frequently to Christmas music at bedtime...yes, even in June and July! That should even make a "Jehovah's Witness" happy.

I recently saw movement under an upside-down wire bicycle basket as I worked in the back garden. It was a robin! No predatory magpie could get in there! Safety! There is a Bible verse that speaks of small birds finding a home, shelter and a place for their young in or near God's altar (Ps. 84:3).

Augustine said to God: "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You!" Jesus said that birds had their nests, but that HE didn't have a place to lay His head. The Lord's words were no complaint, for He was more than at home in The Father! And remember, He was not only our Saviour from sin, but our Example, as Peter says, "that we should follow in His steps." Every person in Britain needs to go home... NOW! That IS a racist remark, for the whole human race needs to get to God—our only proper Home. The Girl Guides have dropped God, but we need to drop IN on God... permanently... and stay there! Jesus' enemies called HIM "a basket case," i.e. crazy; a madman. I don't mind living "in Christ" and being like Him, if that's what crazy means. A fruit basket? Yes, "the fruit of the Spirit!" - See Gal. 5:22. Give me a basket full and running over! It's the best fruit in the world!

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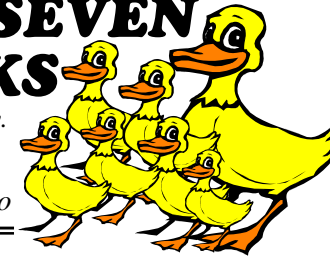
"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

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THE SEVEN DUCKS

(Title from Rev. Archie Atwell)

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At times, some people seem to "have everything going for them!" There was a top leader in the Syrian military that was in such a position. I refer to ancient Syria, not to the trouble spot of today.

This General, in fact, had a spot of trouble himself...actually, more than one. The country itself was not then in danger. This "top brass," named Naaman, had the trouble spots of the disease, leprosy, on his body. Back then, this plague was exceptionally dreaded. For Israel, God gave strict guidelines about dealing with it. It was no laughing matter. There was

no corner-cutting in treatment.

It may not surprise us that General Naaman had an impressive CV. His credentials would gain him great and widespread respect. But the poor man was a leper. His body bore physical evidence against him, that he was worthy to be kept away from others, if he followed the leprosy laws that God gave to Moses.

But Naaman didn't follow God's laws, for he was Syrian... and a Big Shot, too! Yet, a captured Israelite girl told Syria's king that there was a prophet "back home" that could heal Naaman of his leprosy. The king sent Naaman to see that prophet, whose powerful connection to God made him more than ready for the challenge.

Let's apply a supreme and critical fact. The world today is full and running over with leaders who, though they may have great abilities, yet are spiritual lepers. As such, though they

(continued inside)

"So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had A PAIR OF BALANCES (scales) in his hand" (Rev. 6:5). Does this represent scarcity of world provisions, so that it must be rationed? Global economic chaos, like 1929, is being carefully executed.



Is GM FrankenFood part of the plan, along with pharmaceuticals giants? Laws are swiftly changing...but there exists the Highest Law of the Highest Governor, and His Highest and Ultimate Government to which all will bow and give answer. God still calls sin SIN, even if man legalises it! Evil and crime may go unpunished here, and justice here may be corrupted. God sees all and will judge with absolute holiness, wisdom, knowledge and justice. (See back)



(from front) "WE HAVE A LAWYER!!" God has our DNA and fingerprints, and knows our thoughts and motives. The Bible says "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." So no one is without need of God's rescue package which He determined would be achieved only through His Son, whom He appointed as our Defence Lawyer. Throw yourself on the mercy of the court, plead guilty and be set free from sin and sinning. The Judge will forgive, change and keep you. He will pardon and purify, and give power, poise and persistence.

THE SEVEN DUCKS

(continued from front page)

bring numerous and various *apparent* types of improvements of a worldly nature, yet they lead their nation down the path to eternal destruction and damnation. They also bear influence and have impact upon their neighbours and the rest of the world. The same is true for each individual, regardless of their status among the rest of society.

Naaman had another problem beside his physical leprosy. He had a **deep-seated pride** that nearly caused him to return home uncured. You see, as he got close to where the prophet lived, he imagined that the great man of God would come out to him, make a big show of it, perhaps with a waving of his hands so that everyone could see. After all, he was a big shot, and **big shots require a lot of splash**. Naaman got a **splash** the he wasn't expecting. The prophet merely sent his servant with a message to this General. He was to go to the Jordan River and go under water seven times. Sometimes we call that a *dip* or a *dunk*. When a person "**ducks**," they go down quickly, usually in the attempt to "dodge" or avoid something coming their way. So Naaman was to take **seven ducks** in the Jordan.

The great military man was furious. He began listing reasons *not* to comply with the prophet's humiliating demand. He stated that the rivers where he had come from were better and cleaner than this one. It may help us to realise at this point that the disease of leprosy was used by God to vividly illustrate the power and effects of sin. To apply that God-given "image," it means that sin is incurable, as was leprosy...except from a cure from God. It showed that leprosy makes us "unclean," and worthy to keep away from others, so they don't get the contamination from this highly-contagious disease. Leprosy was

terrible. Sin is *far more* terrible, in both its power and effects.

Thankfully, the General had a practical and down-to-earth helper who gently gave him some common sense advice. He said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it? How much more when he simply said 'Wash and be clean?'" Naaman complied. Upon rising from the seventh duck in the Jordan, his skin was like the skin of a little child.

It is the most sensible thing in the world to get thoroughly right with God; clean from the leprosy of sin, and ready to meet God and head for a heavenly home. Thank God for people or things that God sends your way to direct you toward making the best and most sensible decision in your life.

But look out for pride! Pride has various ways and means to detour you. Pride can create a sufficient road-block to stop any progress toward the greatest goal a person could ever have. Pride will provide numerous substitutes for God's own prescribed "Jordan." Pride will provide "adequate excuse" *NOT* to use God's *means* or take God's *Way*. Incidentally, Pride is one of the main characteristics of the Devil himself. No wonder God hates pride, yet gives His help (though undeserved) to those who humble themselves.

I'm so glad Naaman listened, calmed down, swallowed his pride... and got help from God! Naaman was glad, too!

We must all, one day, stand before God to be judged. Many people will face God having had numerous opportunities of turning to God, obeying Him and turning from their pride and sin. Many others will face God having had little or practically no outside spiritual help from anyone, to guide them to know God. God will be absolutely fair to every person born in this world.

Yet, God wants others all over the world to know that He provided a means of rescue and salvation from all sin through

(continued from left)

Jesus Christ. That little slave girl told the wife of the great, but afflicted, military leader where to find a cure. How can we dare keep quiet about God's provision, especially when Jesus commanded us to go and help others to know Him!

Jesus spoke of Naaman in a sermon. He said that there were many lepers in the time of Elisha the prophet, but it was only this one...and a non-Jew, at that!...that was healed through God by that prophet. Let's apply that! First of all, Jesus did *NOT* mean that only one person in all of London (for example) has the chance to find God. Jesus *DID* mean that *any* and *all* can find God, to the total satisfaction of their heart and the full salvation from their sins, *BUT ONLY IF* they will come like Naaman finally came. He didn't "duck" in the water one time, get angry, give up and say "I knew it wouldn't work!" He followed the doctor's orders and took the full dose: **Seven Ducks!** Whatever **Seven Ducks** God demands of you, go all the way and find the cure for the leprosy of your sin. Naaman was thankful for the instant healing. However, he also spoke to the prophet about his future, when he went back home and faced responsibilities. True spiritual life involves the *instant* receiving, as well as the *continuous* walk and maintenance. Naaman covered both concerns, for he wanted to prove his genuine gratitude for what God had done for him.

"I Forgot To Duck"

That is what former Pres. Reagan said when he was shot. But don't fail to duck"...I mean "duck" like Naaman (article above). The Bible asks: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"- (Heb. 2:3). It is so easy to forget, to neglect, to put it off. Duck now. "Today is the day of salvation; now is the accepted time." The Bible *never* says "tomorrow" for this—ALWAYS "Today!" (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7, 13, 15)



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.

HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?!

THE "FLIP-SIDE" THE FRONT PAGE ARTICLE

Gabriel L. Mancino



Elisha the prophet declined gifts from grateful Naaman, who had wanted to reward him liberally. The prophet's servant, Gehazi, was not so satisfied. Naaman's story had a happy ending. Gehazi's didn't. Elisha lived on the same material level as his servant; just as Jesus later did. It wasn't "The System" that troubled Gehazi, but what was churning *within* him.

Dissatisfied and covetous Gehazi ran after Naaman and told him a lie in order to take various financial and material gifts from him for himself. Upon Gehazi's return, Elisha asked where he had gone. Gehazi denied that he had gone anywhere. But God had revealed to Elisha what Gehazi had done. The prophet asked him: "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?"- (2 Kings 5:26). This demonstrates the terrible and multiplying nature of sin! Perhaps God had also revealed to Elisha what plans Gehazi had for the money. In a sense, the *kind* of sin is irrelevant. In *this* case, it was "covetousness"—wanting more. It was *this* sin that awakened the "wretched man" in Rom.7: 7, 24. It was *this* sin that Jesus said chokes the life and word of God from people (Mk. 4:19). No sin is safe to keep and cuddle. By judgment from God, Gehazi contracted Naaman's leprosy.

The greatest desire man can have is to have more of God...more of the Spirit of Christ. Such a desire is spiritual, practical and eternal, and helps us to have that influence on others. **What about ME?** Well, when we face God, it will matter most that we had lived for *Him*, and desired to make Him known to others.