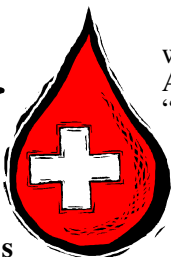


# BLOODY RELIGION

Gabriel L. Mancino



Some people speak with contempt regarding Christ's **Crucifixion**. They reject the Cross and the appalling beating just prior to it, involving the **blood of Christ**. Many know the Bible says that Christ's death was the *ONLY* sacrifice acceptable to God to "bring together" an offended holy God and an offending sinful Man.

I write this article on **D-Day, 6 June**. I just watched (again) the Daily Mail DVD on D-Day from the "World At War" series they reproduced a few years ago from the original 1973 production.

I gladly compare the **D-Day invasion** to Christ's **invasion** of the entrenched enemy, Satan, by means of the Cross. **The blood of D-Day** and of the whole war (WW2) provided freedom for that generation until now. **Christ's blood** made provision for the pardon of *ALL* sin, and for a God-changed life and a bridge to heaven for *ALL* the world's populations of *ALL* times—past, present and future.

For the most part, "**War Is A Racket**," to use the words of U. S. Marine Major General S. D. Butler. At the time of his death, he was the most decorated soldier in U.S. history.

**A thousand General Eisenhowers and Montgomerys**, as great as they were, could not win the war I refer to. I was told that one of my uncles drove for WW2 U. S. Army General Patton,

who was called "**Blood and Guts**." Apparently, some soldiers replied: "Yeah, *HIS* 'guts' and *OUR* blood!" In this vast and incomprehensible war to which I refer, only **the blood of Christ** could provide the victory—**HIS blood!**

**A thousand William Wilberforces** could not undo man's slavery to sin throughout human history. **The Emancipation Proclamation of a thousand Abraham Lincolns** could not prevail to secure man's release from sin's captivity and judgment.

The damage done to mankind (and to the environment) worldwide through *SIN*, is immeasurable. It includes far more than "**high-profile**" villains like **Hitler, Stalin, Mao**, and the various national mafias and cartels, and vile International bankers and so on. The damage flows up and down every street of common man. It is entrenched more than any common enemy of mankind has ever been. This is no exaggeration. **A thousand D-Days could not dislodge it**. What will it take? The words of an old song give the answer. See them in the last paragraph of "**The Best Cleanser**" inside.

Atheism and other religions reject the idea of God letting His Son die, especially in the horrible and bloody manner the Bible says. But the Gospel account is confirmed...with a further PLUS!... asking, "**He that SPARED NOT His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**" (Rom. 8:32). For Profit and Loss—see Matt. 16:24-26.

**BLOODY RELIGION: Comparing Old Testament sacrifices with Christ's sacrifice.** Heb. 9:14 says: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" The next chapter adds, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He [Christ] came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— in the volume of the book it is written of Me— to do Your will, O God.' " (Heb. 10: 4-7 [from Ps. 40: 6-8]). Gory? Yes, but also Glory!



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## TIME FOR A SHOWDOWN

Gabriel L. Mancino

The Gunfight at the OK Corral became "*the greatest gunfight in the history of The Wild West*." Bad men chased bad men, and the winners ended-up legends! There is another "**showdown**" far greater! What a contrast! In *this* one, **ONE** man alone confronts a group of other men. The drama increased as the "hunter" singled out one particular man in that group. **IT WAS TIME FOR A SHOWDOWN!**

Various lessons may be seen and learned in the last chapter of John's Gospel where this "**showdown**" is recorded. **This is NOT a scene from a mere fairy tale**. Our attention centres on the "hunter's" focus upon that one man. Let's look at it.

That "one man" is Peter. He is in a fishing boat with some of the other disciples. Night-time fishing—*the best!*

But it got them zero fish. Suddenly, as morning was braking, the group were called-to from the shore. It was the Lord Jesus, but they

didn't recognise Him. He gave instruction for them to try on the other side of the boat. Success! They realised Who it was and excitedly brought the catch to shore. Jesus had called out, basically saying it this way: "**You haven't caught anything, have you?!**" They admitted, "No." The Lord's goal was not to humiliate or discourage them.

Upon arriving to shore, they found that the Lord already had breakfast cooking. Yet, the Lord says "**Bring some of the fish that you have now caught**." I like that! 1) They would have caught *nothing* without His guidance, yet He said "**The fish YOU caught**." 2) Though He already had breakfast going, He wanted to include what *THEY* had done. 3) The enormous catch failed to break the net! The Lord has room for everyone!

Jesus had told these fishermen at the start of His ministry, *three years before*, that He would them make to become

(continued inside)



"**THE BEST CLEANSER**" (article inside) Zechariah the prophet tells of filthy-clothed Joshua (Zech 3). In Zech 4, the prophet himself is awakened by an angel having **ONE** pre-eminent message to tell him: that God's great things would be accomplished "**NOT by [our] might nor by [our] power, but by My Spirit**," says the **LORD of hosts**" (v.6). June 8, Pentecost Sunday, celebrated the "outpouring" of God's Spirit upon Jesus' disciples (Acts 2). Our greatest need, *individually & collectively*, cannot be experienced while we neglect or oppose the salvation of God by Christ and His Holy Spirit. It's **OUR** time to be awakened! (Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph.5:14). Drop all substitutes, even if it has a cloak of religiosity. We **MUST** have the real!

## TIME FOR A SHOWDOWN (continued from front page)

fishers of men! (Matt. 4:19). Here they caught 153 fish. A few weeks later, they "caught" over 3,000 Spirit-convicted men! That "catch" took place during the Jewish festival of Pentecost, which we celebrated on 8 June. It was the day when God's Holy Spirit was "poured out" upon these and other disciples who were obediently waiting for "the Promise of the Father," that is, The Holy Spirit; "the Promised Gift!"

We like to go camping, and enjoy a camp fire! In this story, Jesus has fish on the fire. **Soon, Peter would feel that HE was on the fire!** The broad picture, which included the group, now turns to focus upon Peter alone with Jesus. Perhaps the others were within hearing range, but "the spotlight" is on Peter and Jesus.

We know very well that not so long before, Peter was huddled around another campfire—the enemy's! It was there that Peter had, three times, denied knowing the Lord. He even cursed and swore to strengthen his lie; all because of the fear of man.

Now at this campfire, Jesus demanded a triple confession of love to Him by Peter. **This was not Jesus' revenge, but vital "medicine" for Peter's full recovery.**

Calling Peter by name, Jesus asked him: **"Do you love Me more than these?"** "More than these" could mean "more than you love these disciples" or "more than you love the fishing life with boats, nets, etc" or "more than these disciples love Me." **Whatever it is** in OUR lives and in OUR hearts, we must put love to God and Christ above all other affections, desires, ambitions, goals and connections of any sort. This will actually INCREASE our capacity to love others, including our "enemies." Yet, there is absolutely no question about it—NOTHING must be allowed to hijack or hinder our love for the Lord.

This pointed and persistent probing hurt. Peter was grieved. Sure. But it was for the life of Peter, and for the lives of others through Peter. Upon completion, Jesus gave Peter a work to do, but also

foretold the manner of Peter's death. In essence, Jesus told Peter — and us — that when we come truly and fully to Him, we take our hands off, and willingly walk with Him and obey Him, regardless of what anyone else may say or do.

Peter's apparent slowness to learn may surprise us. Jesus renewed the call: "Follow Me." Then suddenly, Peter turned, saw John and asked Jesus what John's future would hold. Basically, Jesus told Peter that it was none of his business, and that Peter simply needed to make sure that HE is following the Lord!

Most people, unlike Peter, do not allow themselves to be "corralled" by Jesus Christ. People are "wild" and "on the run" from Christ all over this world; not merely in the Wild WEST! It is an international problem, but it has an international Provision! Do not fear a "Showdown" with Jesus Christ. I can assure you, it will be an "OK Corral!"

## THE BEST CLEANSER (continued from right)

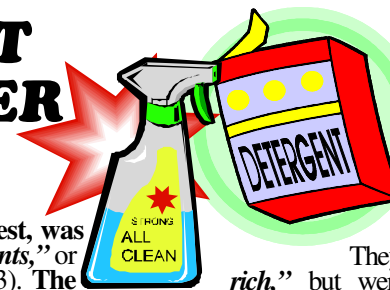
of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here." **Notice two things here:** 1) Though God blesses man generally, many promised blessings are conditional on obedience... "IF...THEN!" 2) Even "IF" a person obeys God, it all belongs to God: "MY ways...MY command...MY house...MY courts." Walking with God involves "hands on" personal experience, and the "hands off" of violating God's "turf" by ignorant or arrogant irreverence.

It is easy and common for people not to see their own spiritual need. Isaiah didn't. He faithfully and rightly pronounced God's "Woes" on this group and that group — that is, until chapter 6. Then he sees "the Lord"... AND himself! Suddenly, he turns the gun barrels of his "woes" away from others and toward himself: "Woe is ME!!!"

**The old song asks and answers:** "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow. No other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus." As the song rightly says, "the blood of Jesus" is not only "The BEST Cleanser," in this case, it is "The ONLY Cleanser!" Be clean. Keep clean.

## THE BEST CLEANSER

Gabriel L. Mancino



Joshua, the high priest, was clothed in "filthy garments," or "unclean robes" (Zech.3). The prophet, Isaiah, referred to himself as "a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6). Don't judge these religious men too quickly. Both had God-sent "visions"—real, relevant and powerful; not only for them and their nation, but for each of us and the rest of the world. **No joke. No exaggeration.**

Likely, neither man was sinning "on the side." Yet, Joshua had Satan right beside him to resist him even while he stood before "the Angel of the Lord." Isaiah's eyes were open to see "the Lord, high and lifted up" in all His glory. What scenes!

Isaiah adds to the confession of his "unclean lips" that he was "living among people of unclean lips." He wasn't saying to God: "Yes, I'm bad, but they are just as bad as me!" Maybe he was seeing that he was so much like everyone else that he was in no condition to help them spiritually! Man is surrounded by evil in the spirit world, but also by "fallen humanity" living all around them. Yet, heaven's help awaits alongside! **THIS is "the real world!"**

Tyrants in the ancient world sometimes punished captives by tying a dead and decaying body to them. The captive would carry this rotting corpse around until they themselves would die a horrible death. This gruesome picture is referred to by St. Paul to illustrate sin's effect on a human being, awakened now to his spiritual need. Carrying around the unthinkable burden of his putrid sin, he cries out: "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?!" (Rom. 7: 24). Paul answered well in chapters 6 and 8!

Paul's picture of this captive's corrupting carcass is even worse than Joshua's "filthy garments!" The "Prodigal Son" was very likely "filthy," as well, out there feeding pigs (Lk. 15:11). Starving, he was ready to eat the pig's food. But he "came to himself." He "woke up"—realised where his help was: "my Father!" The corpse-clad captive had yet to realise where his help was. He had only awakened to his condition, lost in sin. That's a

horrible, but vital start. Yet it IS a start!

St. Paul's "captive" was not the only "wretched man." Jesus revealed the true condition of a group who were not only "wretched," but "poor, miserable, blind and naked."

They thought they were "filthy rich," but were actually "filthy naked!" They had said "I am rich, increased with goods and have need of nothing." Jesus finally warned them "As many as I love, I convict and discipline; therefore, with all your heart, repent for your evil ways." (Rev. 3: 14-22).

So, Joshua the high priest stood before the Angel of the Lord in "filthy clothes." "Then the Angel answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, 'Take away the filthy garments from him.' And to him He said, 'See, I have removed your sin from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.' " This is what the Prodigal's father did for him! It continues: "And I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on his head.' So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by." All heaven sees our "filthy clothes," and lovingly longs to see our clothes changed! (Heb. 12: 1, 2).

Notice that the Angel of the Lord let Joshua know what He had done for him! **The same thing happened to Isaiah** (6:7). God lets us know when He makes the needed instant change in us. **THIS is "the witness of the Spirit,"** as in Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13; 4:30.

Only after God cleansed Isaiah was he able to hear God's call to be a witness to others, and had a readiness to volunteer to go! Sin clogs man's spiritual arteries, blocks his ears, blinds his eyes, hardens and hoodwinks his heart and bewilders his brain. Satan keeps people dressed in "filthy clothes," and does whatever is necessary to keep them like that. May God send a spiritual tsunami to wash all UK inhabitants and visitors from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit"! (2 Cor. 7:1). Send it now, Lord!

With Joshua, another feature of God's working in man is seen. It says: "Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge

(continued on bottom left page)

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.