

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

ARE YOU KICKING AGAINST THE GOADS?

In the ancient world a goad was similar to a modern cattle prod. It was a sharp pointed instrument used by ploughmen while guiding their oxen. If an ox transgressed the prescribed course, then it received a goad. It could not have been painless for the beast, but it did get him back in line.

Although he was not an ox, in giving defense before King Agrippa, the apostle Paul made it clear that he was, in a figurative sense, kicking against the goads (God’s will) before obeying the gospel (**Acts 26:14-15**).

Yes, Paul (formerly known as Saul) despite the facts that he was an outstanding, sincere, and zealous Jew (**2 Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:4-7; Galatians 1:14; Acts 23:1; 2 Timothy 1:3**) was a famous goad kicker.

Before conversion, the path Saul was traveling down led to destruction (**Matthew 7:13**). Yet, God goaded Saul onto the right path! Still today, many, like Saul of olden time, are headed down the broad way of self-destruction (**ibid**). Not wanting any to perish (**2 Peter 3:9**) God is still in the “goading business.” Jesus, however, will not directly appear to deliver the goad. The age of the miraculous is over, as was plainly noted last Sunday (**Ephesians 4:8-15; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10**).

Today, one way God goads the wayward into right standing with him is via those who care enough to deliver, from the Word, a dose of correction (**2 Timothy 4:1-5**). Allow me to illustrate. Let’s say you have a friend who is a member of an institutional, social church. Understanding such is sinful, and not wanting your friend to land in hell (**2 John 9**), you show him from Scripture the error of his ways. When you do so, you are a goading instrument in the hands of God. A biblical example is that of Titus on the island of Crete (**Titus 1:10-13**).

But how about when the roles are reversed? How about when you are on the receiving end of a goad? In that context, think seriously about the following questions:

- Would you rather be ruined by praise than saved by a godly goad (**Ecclesiastes 7:5**)?
- Are you a scorner or a wise man according to God (**Proverbs 9:8**)?
- Are you walking in the way of life or have you erred (**Proverbs 10:17**)?
- Are you stupid (**ba`ar # 1198**) in the sight of God, per **Proverbs 12:1**?
- Are you one who prefers poverty over riches, per **Proverbs 13:18**?
- What does God see when someone goads you: a fool or a prudent person (**Proverbs 15:5**)?
- Are you one who despises your own soul (**Proverbs 15:32**)?
- Are you fighting your parents every inch of way as they goad you **Proverbs 22:15**?
- Do you realize that a real friend does not always tell you what you want to hear (**Proverbs 27:6**)?
- Are you like those rebellious, lying folks noted in **Isaiah 30:8-10**?
- Do you undermine those who dare to goad you (**Jeremiah 18:11-18**)?
- What would you do if you forced the congregation here to withdraw from you because you would not stop kicking against the goads (**2 Thessalonians 3:6**)? Would you sully the local church – spewing lie after lie – or would you soften your heart, thank the one who pricked you, and repent?

Listen, it is not fun to be goaded. It hurts. Sometimes it hurts a great deal. But be that as it may, for the sake of our souls, we simply must humble ourselves and accept the godly goads that come our way (**Proverbs 15:10; 16:18**).