

The Inscrutable Question: Agrippa Sends Paul to Rome; Principles of Application from “Breaking the Harness”; Invisible Impact of the Pivot

79. Paul was out of the geographical will of God because he first got out of the directive will of God. God's permissive will allowed Paul to go to Jerusalem but His overruling will delivered Paul from the sin unto death.
80. That deliverance was executed under the principle that Jesus Christ controls history by means of the laws of divine establishment.
81. But now that Paul is under the laws of divine establishment he is bound by their requirements. Now that he has appealed to Caesar, the men whose power rescued him from Jewish law have no choice but to follow the requirements of Roman law.
82. End result? Paul will go to Rome where he belonged all along. Paul will arrive as a prisoner rather than a free man. But while there he will with far greater insight write four more books that will become a part of the New Testament canon.
83. This entire saga has had an impact on both Paul and the Gentile king Agrippa. Both understood the implications of the Lord's use of the goads metaphor.
84. Both understood that to kick against the goads was fruitless, useless, and futile. Paul responded as an unbeliever through faith alone in Christ alone. Agrippa considered it and apparently kicked his own goads.
85. However, Paul is now ready to resume his spiritual life. He is going to Rome. The journey there will itself have tremendous impact on Paul because of the various dangers and trials he encounters along the way.
86. The events of the trip and his arrival in Rome are chronicled in Acts 27-28. The last two verses of the book inform us that Paul was under house arrest for two years before he was released by the order of Nero.

Acts 28:30 - And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,

V 31 - preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

87. It was during this two-year period that Paul wrote what are called the four Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. [See Visual: “Time Line of Paul's Epistles.”]
88. We have now learned that the Greek metaphor, “kicking against the goads” may be defined as “an expression of futile and detrimental resistance to a stronger power.”
89. For the purpose of our study we have taken this metaphor and two others to describe the sequence of events that takes place when creature volition rejects the directive will of God:
 - 1) “Kicking against the goads,” describes the rejection of warnings that indicate violations of the directive will of God.
 - 2) “Jumping the trace” illustrates the decision to ignore these warnings and arrogantly continue one's defiance of the directive will of God.
 - 3) “Breaking the harness” portrays open rebellion against the directive will of God.
90. Lucifer carried out this sequence when he rebelled against the directive will of God in eternity past.

91. Paul followed this same sequence in his fall, which we have now examined in the book of Acts.
92. Now it's time to note principles of application for us to consider regarding these metaphors. In our study of "Breaking the Harness" we have noted under Paragraph A an Introduction. Paragraph B: Kicking the Goads. Paragraph C: Isagogics of the Metaphor. Paragraph D: Paul Kicks against the Goads.

E. Principles of Application from "Breaking the Harness":

1. There are two major harnesses that make up civilized societies: (1) the Laws of Divine Establishment and (2) Bible doctrine.
2. The first harnesses and restrains everyone in the society so that the commonwealth may maintain civility while it seeks to advance within an environment of freedom.
3. Within the commonwealth are a few who subscribe to the second harness and they thus become invisible heroes who make it possible for the society to advance.
4. This principle is stated clearly in:

Leviticus 26:3 -"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,

V 4 - then I shall give you ..."

5. What the Lord says he will give to the people of Israel as a result of a lifestyle of righteousness and the execution of His mandates is described in verses 4 through 13.
6. However, if the people fail to do these things then the entire nation suffers the effects of the five cycles of discipline.

Leviticus 26:14 -"But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments,

V 15 - if, instead you reject My statutes [**kick the goads**], and if your soul abhors My ordinances [**jump the trace**] so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant [**break the harness**],

V 16 - I, in turn, will do this to you: ..."

7. What follows through verse 39 is a delineation of the five cycles of discipline to a rebellious Client Nation.
8. Individuals make up a society. The more believers there are who know, defend, and apply the Word of God then the more prosperity flows to the entire nation.
9. Thus, those who do these things have put on the harness of doctrine and have developed personal integrity. This produces virtue love and a pleasant, courteous, and tranquil environment prevails among the citizenry.