

Review: Goads Metaphor; Soul: Tabula Rasa; Body: A Gene-pool Crapshoot

Although not followers of either Judaism or Christianity, both Festus and Agrippa were familiar with the consequences of kicking against the goads imposed by the gods.

Governor Festus rejected Paul's testimony and called him crazy.

Acts 26:24 - And while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is diving you mad."

Yet, Agrippa admitted to at least the temptation to believe that Jesus was the one true God.

Acts 26:28 - Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

Having heard Paul's defense, the two men along with Agrippa's wife, Bernice agreed that Paul was innocent of all charges and really could be set free had he not appealed to Caesar.

Acts 26:30 - And the king arose and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them,

Acts 26:31 - and when they had drawn aside, they began talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment."

Acts 26:32 - And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

The impact of this passage is that both Paul as unbelieving Saul and the Gentile king Agrippa both understood the implications of the Lord's use of the goads metaphor. Both understood that to kick against the goads was fruitless, useless, and futile. Paul responded through faith in Christ, Agrippa considered it and, in all likelihood, kicked his own goads.

The application of all of this to our study in Deuteronomy 4:10 is that parents, in order to teach their children, may impose the pricks of goads when necessary, in order to solicit the correct attitude and compliance to their policies.

Review

Our research into the goad's metaphor was for the purpose of amplifying the use of the Hebrew verb *lamad* in:

Deuteronomy 4:10 - Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, "Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear me all the days they live on the earth and that they may teach their children."

This verb carries with it the ideas of both training and teaching. The training aspect is seen in the derivative from *lamad* which is *mamed*, translated "oxgoad" in Judges 3:31. The term is used in one passage of the New Testament:

Acts 26:14 - And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads [**kentron**].'

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, whether it be that of a god, of destiny, or of man (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 3, p.664).*”

Kittel, Gerhard. Vol. 3 of the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, p. 364, s.v. “kicking against the goads”:

The stronger power as far as children are concerned is his parents who may inflict the sting of goads as the situation may dictate.

The verb *lamad* in Deuteronomy 4:10 is used in 1 Chronicles 5:18 to describe the training of recruits in the military.

1 Chronicles 5:18 - The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh ... were skillful in battle.

The word “*skillful*” is the verb *lamad* and indicates the intensive training these men went through in order to learn the art of war. And so, the training of a child includes such things as the raised voice, a restraining arm, or a stinging switch, each executed with the intent of frustrating the child's desire to follow the propensity of his sinful nature.

Such training enables the parent to then teach the child the right way to go.

Most of parents' time in the child's formative years is consumed by training the child to control his sinful nature. If successful, most of the time in the adolescent years is consumed in teaching.

In our next paragraph we will undertake the differences between training and teaching.

XI. Training for Control, Teaching for Self-control

The whole objective of child rearing is to develop the lump of clay issued to you by God and mold it into a vessel of honor.

God created the soul while the body is the result of a gene-pool crapshoot. The soul is perfect in essence but created *tabula rasa*.

The body is infested with the contagion of the sinful nature which is programmed to seize control of the soul in order to dominate thought, decision, and action.

The parents' job is to take what's issued and work with it. Their attitude should be similar to that of John Paul Jones, who wrote in 1775:

“It is by no means enough that an officer should be capable ... He should be as well a gentleman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor ... No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his attention, even if the reward be only one word of approval. Conversely, he should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate. The ships themselves must be ruled under a system of absolute despotism.

I trust that I have now made clear to you the tremendous responsibilities We must do the best we can with what we have.”

A despot is a ruler who, according to Webster, rules with absolute authority and unlimited power.