

“The Goads” (Slide 1)

Acts 9

Reading: Proverbs 10:4-13

Lesson Reading Explained:

You might wonder why I chose this reading but I believe in many ways it relates to standing idle which leads to the necessity of *goad*ing and pushing back against the righteous way. It also contains many observable behaviors.

The Goads-Urging!

The wording for Acts 9 is interesting and different from translation to translation. It's important in understanding the definition from the *Greek* regarding the intensity of which Saul sought to put a stop to the teaching of the *Way*.

Saul not only wanted to stop this movement but he is determined to physically eliminate or jail anyone who follows or practices what he considers contrary to what God expects from His followers.

It's also interesting that some translations leave out Jesus' statement to Saul of which our title to this lesson is derived. I really don't have a good explanation as to why?

Personally, most often I study from the NASB1995 version which does not include this statement. Yet, I try to do my best to familiarize myself with other translations.

Many commentaries are based upon the KJV, so I often consult with it as well and then will turn my attention to the NKJV which many in our brotherhood use.

The following is taken from the NKJV.

Acts 9:1-9 (Slide 2)

1 Then Saul, still breathing (breathing out - KJV) threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, (Slide 3) whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

(Slide 4) **5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"**

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

(Slide 5) **Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."**

7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, (Slide 6) and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

(Slide 7) **"breathing out"** comes from a Greek word that means *"to breathe out or on."* To understand the intensity of Saul's intentions and actions towards the followers of the Way, consider the following analogy: *Breathe on* would be likened to someone breathing on you with their *"Bad Breath."*

We've probably all had this experience at some time or another. I've probably been the perpetrator of this very thing with my *"coffee breath."* I try to avoid close contact with folks until I have a mint or some deterrent.

Often, bad breath is chronic. It comes from a condition within a person. It is therefore a condition that originates from inside and then is breathed out or on someone else. In medical terms it is known as "*halitosis*."

There are several very dramatic ways in which this condition is treated because it is rooted very firmly within a person. Perhaps that gives us an idea as to the necessity of the drastic way in which Saul became Paul the Apostle, a preacher of the "Way!"

With the meaning of *breathed out or on* in focus, we can understand more clearly this terminology that describes the mental attitude of Saul towards the followers of Christ.

His mind was filled with the desire to persecute them and to annihilate them. The Apostle himself says his attitude toward Christians reflected *madness*:

Acts 26:9-11 (Slide 8)

9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; (Slide 9) and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly

enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

The word ***mad*** from the *KJV* is translated ***enraged*** here. We might think that from the word ***mad*** that Saul was *out of his mind*, but this isn't an uncontrolled instance of madness but rather one that has method and purpose.

Saul was following what he believed God would have him to do. He believed that the *high priest* had the authority to give to him to arrest and put into chains those who followed ***Jesus of Nazareth***. It was all calculated as he received what we might say today were *arrest warrants*.

He never acted independently, believing that the high priest had the authority to prevent this type of religious criminality.

Saul's zeal was a factor in his salvation!!

Suddenly, everything changed. Apostle Paul describes the light that engulfed him as brighter than the sun in his defense before King Agrippa.

Acts 26:13 (Slide 10)

“along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.”

So intense was the light that Saul fell to the ground and The Lord spoke. (Slide 11) ***“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”***

Saul didn't recognize the voice and he was in shock and was disoriented, physically and mentally.

“Who are You, Lord?” I am also convinced that Saul knew about a man named Jesus and that he was a leader of this movement that he is now persecuting. But Saul didn't acknowledge Him as the Messiah.

It also seems reasonable that before this incident on the road to Damascus that Saul believed that this same Jesus died and is still dead.

The word **Lord** is rendered “Sir” at least 12 times in the KJV. So Jesus identifies Himself and tells Saul where he stands:

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

I don't know how to put into words the astonishment that Saul must have experienced.

(Slide 12) A “goad” was an iron rod used by those with livestock or working animals to “urge them along.” When

the animal would kick back the instrument would just pierce into them more.

The concept then is that if Saul continued to rebel against Jesus, his experience would become more miserable and difficult.

Sometimes in life we need to be “*goaded*,” that is, *urged* to carry out our duties and responsibilities. In Saul’s case it was futile to resist. It was inevitable that Paul would become a prolific preacher of the “Way.” To continue his resistance would simply bring more consequence.

Urging then is a necessity to achieving God’s goals for the church. Many will remain *idle* unless *urged* to do what they should be doing.

Apostle Paul states in:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15 (Slide 13)

12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

(Slide 14) ***14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to***

anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

One can easily recognize the *urging* of the Apostle to do all these things outlined. (Slide 15) The word ***unruly*** can be translated as *idle*. If we remain idle then none of the Lord's work will be done. Thus the saying; *"idle time is the devil's workshop."*

In the Lord's church, preaching is a method of *goad*ing or *urging*.

2 Timothy 4:2 (Slide 16)

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

This is to be done in such a way as to prevent anyone from wanting to *"kick against the goads!!"*

The *Holy Scripture* is in a sense our *"Spiritual goad."* It is designed to keep us on the narrow path and follow with our eyes forward.

However, many rebel, as Paul tells Timothy and follow a doctrine that appeals to their own appetite. Jesus tells His disciples to let such people alone:

Matthew 15:10-14 (Slide 17)

10 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

(Slide 18) 12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

13 But He answered and said, (Slide 19) "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

The blind following blind guides do not kick back against the goad because they need no urging.

So often we cause our own problems. We cause the goad to sink deeper because of our procrastination and our own *apathy*. It's like having a toothache but living in denial because we don't want to go to the dentist. The pain will only get worse and going to the dentist is inevitable.

The pain without Christ will only get worse. So many are in pain but don't realize it or for whatever reason, will not respond to it. They continuously and needlessly kick back.

I am reminded of one portion of the lyrics in the song:

(Slide 20) *What a friend we have in Jesus!!*

Oh what peace we often forfeit

Oh what needless pain we bear

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Invitation

*Once Saul acknowledged who the voice speaking to him was, he asked; **"Lord, what do You want me to do?"***

*Notice Jesus did not say; "Saul, you are now saved" or "Saul you need only confess my name to be saved." Rather He told him; **"Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."***

He was taught what he must do to be saved and he obeyed. He repented, confessed the name of Jesus and was baptized.

If you have been taught what to do to be saved but have not yet responded, why wait? Be baptized today for the remission of sin and become a child of God.

If you have been baptized but feel the need for prayer for whatever reason, let your wish be known.

Please let us know how we may serve you this day.....

Reading:

Proverbs 10:4-13

***4 Poor is he who works with a negligent hand,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.***

***5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely,
But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.***

***6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.***

***7 The memory of the righteous is blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot.***

***8 The wise of heart will receive commands,
But a babbling fool will be ruined.***

***9 He who walks in integrity walks securely,
But he who perverts his ways will be found out.***

***10 He who winks the eye causes trouble,
And a babbling fool will be ruined.***

***11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.***

***12 Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all transgressions.***

***13 On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found,
But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.***

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