

## 630 "Kicking Against the Pricks"

President Trump's mediation efforts to end the dreadful war between Russia and Ukraine, and to bring some sense to the Middle East miseries, are currently high on his "to-do list". In our prayers we wish good progress for him and for all others involved in these efforts to bring about some sort of peace. A longing for "on earth peace, good will toward men" of course runs very deep (Luke 2.14b, KJV), but how to achieve, shape and maintain such peace, if it was ever achieved by Man's efforts, are contentious issues, to say the least.

These realities bring us to the familiar "buffers", into which the railway train of well-meaning "human endeavour" always crashes! Those buffers are set firm and immovable on their solid base, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3.23). Man in his sinfulness, pride, and instinct to be independent from God, never learns that those railway buffers are only ever dismantled when Man repents, and confesses guilt, and asks for forgiveness from both God and his fellow man. No side in any conflict, be it in the home or between nations, is going to be 100% pure and lily-white: "Sorry" remains a very healing word!

Preceding those Luke 2 words about the longed-for "peace on earth", we read these words from "the angel of the Lord" (2.9a) - " 'Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord' ... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST! ... " (our capitals! - from 2.10-11,13-14). This isn't, as they say, "rocket science"! Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is The Boss. His Will HAS prevailed, despite Man's antics egged on by the devil since Genesis Chapter 3, and that divine Will SHALL prevail, in its entirety, just as is set forth in God's Holy Word (egs., Deuteronomy 8.3b / Isaiah 55.11 / Matthew 4.4; 5.17-19 / John 10.35b-38 / Hebrews 4.12-16 / Revelation 22.18-19).

What do we gather from all this? - from the earnest mediation efforts of men like Donald Trump to improve things for Americans and others on the one hand, and from God's settled Word on the other? In essence, we gather afresh that simple lesson which Saul of Tarsus was abruptly taught by the glorified Lord Jesus on the Damascus road - "[it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9.5b) - a reference to the oxen in the ploughing team resisting the long goad, of authority and

commandment, pricking them from their ploughman-boss following on behind them.

Man likewise "kicks against the pricks" from his own "Ploughman Boss". We can be grateful and prayerful for honest efforts by leaders like Donald Trump to try to do some good on the world stage; may they indeed have success in bringing some calm and stability. But at the same time we have been shown God's Greater Programme for this earth and for His wider creation. After the removal from the earth of the Christ-redeemed believers, both physically dead and physically still living (familiar references - I Thessalonians 4.13-18 / I Corinthians 15.51-52 / John 11.25-26), grim times of divine judgment are coming, for the unbelieving Jews, the apostate Church and the unrighteous Gentile nations; this being the promised 7-year tribulation period under the sway of the antichrist figure and system, (egs., some more familiar references - Jeremiah 30.7 / Daniel 9.27 / Matthew Chapter 24 / Revelation Chapters 4-19).

THEN Christ returns in glory and establishes His Kingdom on this earth - and God's peace - "the times of restitution of all things ... the entering in to God's rest" - will be experienced once again for the first time since Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 (Revelation 20.1-6 / Acts 3.19-21 / Exodus 20.8-11 / Hebrews 3.18-4.11). Then come final judgments, "a new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem", and the establishment of God's eternal state for the Christ-redeemed (Revelation Chapters 21-22). Praise God, that is the time of no more "tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain, curse, night, candle, sun" - "for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (from Revelation 2.7; 21.4-8; 22.3-7).

So we find ourselves involved in the immediate scene of human efforts to bring about some peace, or at least some ending of some wars; and we are also involved, by God's grace and revelation and on a far higher plane, with God's supreme and unstoppable will.

Likewise, in Christ we are granted such wonderful blessings for now and to come; and in Christ we are entrusted to make these blessings known in God's sinful, war-torn, kicking-against-the-pricks world.

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