

## **Blinders - - Written by Steve Stutzman**

I approached a traffic light here locally in Amishville, USA. There was a buggy in front of me at the light. Across the road at the intersection was a very large, very loud, obnoxious machine that was grinding up the pavement for some sort of construction project. I watched the horse to see how it would respond to the egregious racket it was about to pass closely by.

The light changed ..... the horse started off.... And without a smidgeon of observable fear trotted by the machine on down the road. I let out a sigh and went on my way; but as I went, I remembered Sunday.....

Sunday we went as a family to sing at a local church. We went earlier than usual, to allow time for set-up, and there were a lot of buggies around headed for various local services. As I slowed the bus to go around one such unit, I sensed that not all was well in front of me. The horse balked and reared, as the driver wrestled for control. I tried to sneak around as quietly as possible..... I actually thought of hitting the Jake- brake just to see what would happen, but hey.... It was Sunday, so I quickly pushed the thought of naughtiness away.

Set me to wondering tho... what makes one horse act so bizarre, and the next so calm? I have learned a bit about the brutes in my life, but still would consider myself largely horse-illiterate. As I mused, this verse came to my mind:

Re 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know ***that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts:*** and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

When a young horse is being trained, blinders are put around the eyes. This prevents the horse from seeing too much.... And the less he sees, the less he reacts to. Eventually, at least in theory, the horse learns to trust the driver; to trust the one who holds the reins, the one who is his master, who is in charge and in fact, owns him. This reliance becomes solidified thru repeated experience, and since fear in horses is a learned trait, ( they are born without it) they unlearn it also. The dependence on the reins becomes so second nature that the horse responds to slight touches without any real regard for what is going on around it.

And I wondered..... what about me? How do I respond to the reins in my life? How do I respond to the screams and roars of the demonic fiends around me as they speak their obnoxious, egregious lies into the culture I live in? What is my response as possibilities to be destroyed roar toward me? Have I learned the Way of the Master..... or am I still the skittish, dangerous, stallion that the Master cannot trust? Has the gentle Voice of the Spirit become so second nature to me that I have unlearned my fear? Do I rely on the gentle touch, responding immediately to the wishes of the One Who, in fact, owns me? And what of my blinders?

Horses are more productive when they can't see around them. At least, that is the theory. Further, they are less apt to respond in a negative fashion to things they do not understand. But eventually, the blinders should be able to be removed.

HHmmmm.... That sounds strangely familiar. My dad telling me what to do, no questions, no explanations, just direct orders, when I was young; then explaining more as I grew up, until I was released to see and do on my own. Doing English in 6th Grade, and telling the teacher it was unnecessary and stupid, as we would NEVER need it; and hearing her tell us that if we still complained, we hadn't done enough yet. And me, years ago, begging and begging God for knowledge and Wisdom; hearing only the words, "Not until you surrender."

As life passes, I react less. I have become a tad more purposeful with what I do, and more responsive to the gentle inflections of the Reins. And slowly, the blinders are being removed.

To be totally honest, I am not sure I am ready for all this. Some of the things I see today that I could not see 2 years ago, almost freak me out. Some of the things I understand about the culture and the people around me.... Even churches..... are things that I have no idea how to handle. As my view widens, I fight the impulse to run and hide.

And then, there is that little tug on the reins.... That Gentle Voice, and I remember: that just because I can see does not mean I need to respond; that my Owner knows exactly what He is doing; that the roar headed toward me is only a truck, it will not kill me but pass by; that the noise around me need not detract me from where my Master wishes me to take Him.

Ps 26:2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.