

THE CAMEL'S NOSE

Many remember the old Arabic fable about the Arab who wanted to take gifts to a princess, consisting of dresses and jewelry. On his way across the desert on a camel to present the gifts, he decided to rest when the sun went down, and it became very cool at night. He coiled up in his small tent and went to sleep. His camel woke him to make a request, saying, "Master, it is cold out here. Would you please just let me stick my nose in the tent with you to keep it from freezing?" The master agreed, as it would not keep himself from keeping warm. Later, the camel woke him again, this time requesting that he be allowed to put his whole head into the tent. Again, his master permitted it. Then he woke him later, saying, "Master, my front legs are cold, and I cannot get warm as long as they are cold. Would you let me put them in?" The master reluctantly agreed. This continued, until the camel was able to get his hind legs in, and then his whole body. It was soon so crowded, that the camel said, "Master, it is too crowded in here for both of us. You'll have to get out." So, the Arab was crowded out of own tent, with his gifts for the princess. The winds began to rage, and blew his gifts of dresses and jewelry away. He could never find them to continue on his journey. There are several versions of this fable, but I like this one the best.

Today, that camel is still trying to get his nose into the tent of our government, the church, and into the lives of God's people. When the devil worked through the nation of Rome in the first century, he was able to then attack the church, and ultimately the woman's seed—individuals who were following Christ (Rev. 12:13-17). Today, he works through the camel's nose in this same order. He tries to change and gain control of nations, the church and individuals on earth. Let's observe his progress and success.

First, the camel's nose NATIONALLY. Nations have long oppressed their citizens through slavery and persecution. Think about the nation of **Egypt** that held Abraham's seed in bondage for hundreds of years. Then, there was the nation of **Babylon** that persecuted the Jews in Daniel's time. Later, there was the nation of **Israel** (the Jews) that persecuted the church in the first century, until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The nation of **Rome** continued the persecution of Christians for centuries. The camel got fully inside the tents of these nations.

God was concerned about the NATIONS of the world, that He wanted the gospel to be preached to them, beginning in the Jewish nation, and spreading it into all the world (Mark 16:15f; Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:16; Col. 1:23). God favors the nations that adhere to His principles. "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the **nations** that forget God*" (Psa. 9:17). "*Blessed is the **nation** whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance*" (Psa. 33:12). "*Righteousness exalts a **nation**, but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Prov. 14:34). "*But in every **nation** he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him*" (Acts 10:35). There might well be the saying, "As goes the nations, so goes its citizens...or the church".

In America, as well as many other nations of the world, the camel stuck in his nose in the form of alcoholic drink. America is fast becoming the "drinkingest" nation of the world. God has long forbidden kings to drink, because it would pervert justice. Politicians and public servants, as well as private citizens are caught up in the drinking of alcoholic beverages—to their own early death, financial ruin, or loss of well-being. We have had former presidents of some of our Christian colleges to succumb to alcohol. Solomon said that those who drink alcohol are fools (Prov. 20:1). God's people are going to abstain from allowing the camel's nose to come into their lives.

Materialism has been another plague in America. People are so desperate for material gain that they are willing to spend all of their time in employment (legal or

illegal) in quest of riches (1 Tim. 6:7-10). Many years ago, some states had a “blue law”, which meant that certain businesses could not operate on Sunday, which was set aside for worship and relaxation. The camel stuck his nose in the tent, and now he basically occupies the whole tent.

Several years ago, the camel stuck his nose into our school systems, and made our nation agree to ultimately outlaw prayer, the Bible, and the teaching to the account of creation, in our public schools, or public places. It is illegal to display the ten commandments in many places in America. Little by little God and His book have been kicked out of schools and society. America was founded on the principles of the Bible from the ten commandments through the teaching of Christ and the apostles, but it is fast becoming an atheistic, and agnostic nation, with the Muslim religion rapidly gaining control in many areas, in opposition to Christianity. Muslims have announced that by 2050, America will be completely Islamic—meaning that everyone will either be a part of Islam, or die. At this writing, American dollars are being spent to produce videos promoting Islam and their view of “women's rights”, while the Bible is being attacked and outlawed by our government.

In the matter of morals, the camel quickly stuck his whole head into the tent of our society, by causing it to approve the abortion of babies in America, from the early 1970's, till today—in which time multiplied millions of babies have been legally murdered in America. While homosexuality was once banned as revealed in the Bible (Lev. 18:22; Gen. 18, 19; Rom. 1:24-28; Jude 7), it is now popular, and fast becoming illegal to oppose this way of life. The claim is made that women (wanting abortion rights) that women have a “RIGHT” to do whatever they want to do with their bodies. BUT, it is not their “right” to do whatever they want to do with the bodies of babies. The unborn child is already a separate body—it just happens to be carried by another body, inside the womb of the expectant mother. It is not HER body that is being aborted, but the body of an innocent child. That child has its own blood type, its own DNA, its own heart and brain (where there is life). To destroy an unborn child (who is innocent—having done no evil) is to shed innocent blood, which is murder—that the Lord hates (Prov. 6:16, 17). Even now states are agreeing to authorize same-sex “marriages”, which lifestyle is an abomination unto God. The standard of God and the scripture, is that of a union between *male* and *female*—which is the ONLY union that can reproduce human life. God did not make two roosters, but He made a rooster and a hen. Two roosters cannot reproduce baby chickens by themselves. It would be “unnatural” for them to do so. Some say that God owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology for destroying them because of their immorality, and then tolerating America for being as bad or worse. When God's standard, the BIBLE, is rejected, it opens the door to any or all moral impurities.

Second, the camel's nose in the CHURCH. Now, we can say, “As goes the nation, so goes the church”. It is disappointing, but not surprising, to hear and read about Protestant denominations endorsing homosexuals, and same-marriages, and Roman Catholic priests practicing pedophilia, with the support of the Vatican, in covering up of the wicked priests who love to sexually abuse young boys. We have preachers in the Lord's church who have been caught up in adultery with women in and out of the congregation. Preachers, elders, and members of the church are more and more arguing that it is NOT sinful to divorce and remarry for other reasons than “for fornication” (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:11), and would welcome those to have done so, to be in fellowship with their congregations. Some congregations have even been established for the convenience of homosexuals. One preacher has even written a book endorsing polygamy, as well as approving “marriages” that the Bible condemns (Rom. 7:1-3). Some older folks, as well as young people, are skipping the “marriage license”

and just moving in and “living together” in adultery, with little or no rebuke from anyone in the church, much less being dis-fellowshipped, as the New Testament teaches (1 Cor. 5:1-13). One elder once told me that if they withdrew fellowship from every member in that fairly large congregation that had been divorced and remarried, they would not have enough members left in the congregation to pay their electric bill.

Social drinking, and the serving of wine at weddings, is not frowned on at all in some congregations and families, while anyone who speaks against it is “old-fashioned and living in the dark ages”. My Bible STILL says that the use of alcohol is contrary to the will of God. The argument that “Jesus turned water into wine, so to drink any kind of alcoholic drink is acceptable” is because they have allowed the camel to stick his whole head into the church.

Under the guise of “women's rights”, the camel's nose has come under the tent, to claim equality of men and women. According to Gal.3:27-28, men and women both have equal rights to being children of God “in Christ”. However, men and women are different physically, and women are even said to be the “weaker” vessels (1 Pet. 3:7). Women do NOT have certain RIGHTS that belong to men. They do not have the right to take over the headship of the home, and be over the husbands (Eph. 5:23, 24). Women do not have the scriptural right to be elders or deacons in the church. They do not have the right to lead in public prayer where men are present (1 Tim.2:9, 10). They do not have the right to publicly preach and teach over men (1 Tim.2:12). Some argue in vain that we need to study these matters in light of “culture”, and as IT changes, so should our thinking in the matter of “women's rights”, such as we have with “slavery” in America. However, in 1 Tim. 2, Paul goes ON to give divine guidelines for the man-woman relationship in the church. He states (1) That Adam was first formed, v. 13, and (2) Eve was deceived in Eden, v. 14. These facts will forever be true, and they must be respected in the church today. Women have GREAT talents, and they should and can be used, but only in the realm God authorizes. Paul points out there are 4 ranks of authority which are GOD, CHRIST, MAN and WOMAN—in that order (1 Cor. 11:3). Christian women are using their talents in many ways, and need not strive to take over man's responsibilities. In Numbers 12, Miriam wanted to have equality with Moses in the matter of the word of God, and she was severely rebuked and punished because of it. A **man** (Moses) spoke to God to remove the penalty placed upon her (vs. 1-16). To “argue” that means that (1) God has removed the penalty from her means that God releases ALL women in ALL ages to seek equality with men in teaching the word of God, and (2) This was in the Old Testament, and since it has been taken away, we are free from that restriction—**means nothing**, for we are still under the principles of relationship between the sexes, and under the New Testament which STILL teaches it, even though it WAS written some 2000 years ago.

Then there is the matter of “instrumental music” in worship. It is now argued that our “old arguments” that were used to oppose its use, are now outdated, and times and culture have changed. Should we quit worshiping GOD, or serving JESUS because they are “old”? The church stood for hundreds of years WITHOUT use of instrumental music, because of scriptural teaching against it, and should continue to do so, because the scripture is still there. We shall not take time in this study to look at the well-known arguments for and against the use of instrumental music in worship, but mainly we are concerned about the camel sticking his nose in the tent. Many congregations let the nose in by *first* bringing or allowing pianos or other instruments to be brought into the building for “youth entertainment”, etc., and *then* letting them be USED in youth devotionals, and/or special worship assemblies, and then the whole camel has gotten into their tents, and they are vehemently defended.

A couple of brief paragraphs from one Keith (or Kieth) Mitchell portrays the shallowness of the logic and reasoning of those trying to promote the use of instruments

in churches of Christ. Here are the two brief paragraphs.

“Instrumental praise was first used by Miriam leading praise with both singing and dancing at the Exodus. It was commanded in the Law when Levitical worship was set up for the tabernacle/later Temple.

Instrumental praise (sumphona) and praise dancing are specifically endorsed by Jesus in Luke 15 where Jesus pictures the Father's House (church of the living GOD) receiving prodigal sons into fellowship.”

It doesn't take a genius to observe that what Miriam might have done is not our authority to do the same thing today. Other than finding Moses' mother to care FOR Moses when Pharaoh was trying to kill all the young boys, we find very little about which we can commend Miriam in other matters. Even so, what she did in Exodus 15 was before the law of Moses was even given in the first place, and if we are to follow that, why would we even need the new testament? Also, note that Mitchell said she was “dancing”--would that authorize dancing in the church today?? Remember, that Paul said the priesthood AND the law have both “changed” (Heb. 7:12; 8:13; Col.2:14), so why bring in something that Mitchell says should be in the tabernacle or temple. We are not in the wilderness, OR in Jerusalem. Then, the example of Luke 15, it simply says there was “music and dancing”, and it is foolish to think that it was in a “house”, that it represents the church, or what was to be done IN “Christian worship” today. Are we to assume that any time the word “house” is used in the OT that it prophetically refers to the church? What about the house of Pharaoh? Of Israel? Of Jacob when he brought his bride into it? In the NT, we find that “house” may refer to the physical body (2 Cor. 5:1), and that may refer to a place where Christians can do things that they cannot do in the church (1 Cor. 11:23). Enough said! We might also note that the father instructed that a “fatted calf” be killed. Does that symbolize Christ, OR does this mean that we are to revert back to the killing of calves in worship in the church today??

Third, the camel's nose in INDIVIDUALS. Satan obviously realizes that if he can get the camel's nose into the minds of individual Christians, he can effect some minor and major changes. This is the way the apostasy developed in the first century. Paul warned that it would begin in some places within the leadership by the elders in some congregations (Acts 20:28-30). Some individuals tried to bind the law of Moses and circumcision upon Gentiles who were converted (Acts 15:5). Various false doctrines began to be preached by some individuals that brought about a departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3). After this great apostasy, some began to see its errors, and began what they thought would correct things—A REFORMATION. This really did not work, but merely directed the error in other directions. Many of the reformers had great ideas, but they had difficulty finding enough people to follow the scripture and avoid establishing what would become major denominations in that 16th century. With these efforts failing to stop error, many in the 18th and 19th centuries effected a RESTORATION movement. Perhaps those leading in this movement were merely trying to find ways to make that old Reformation movement WORK, but it was finally determined that what WOULD work was to **abandon** the creeds and doctrines that the reformers had developed, and **return** to the scriptures, the writings of the New Testament (the seed of the kingdom, Luke 8:15), and bring the original church back into existence. This was effected, and recognized by the U. S. Census in 1906.

Now in the 20th and 21st centuries, the camel is sticking his whole head into the tent. One of the early appearances of his nose was by some professors of ACU and Pepperdine who began to quote from and write about some things written by a Bible Chair director in Denison, Texas. These “noses” thought it was time for a “new

hermeneutic", or to change our way of interpreting the NT through its commands, examples, and implications. The nearest to any method of change was the argument on "culture". That failed, but some cling to it—obviously not yet realizing it's silliness and failures. The camel finally got its whole head in, and its whole body in many places, in order to CHANGE the church, so as to *get along with denominations*. They are not content to go out and START new denominations, but want to CHANGE the existing church, in its mission to BE the church that began in the first century, and make it LIKE the denominations of the world today.

Even the religious world OUTSIDE of the church of Christ is clamoring for a change in understanding scripture. Brian Cahill, writer for CNN, argues that "Jesus' message of love and inclusiveness over doctrine and orthodoxy" needs to prevail, AND until we start looking out for what is GOOD for mankind and quit concerning ourselves with the matter of "offending God", things will continue to go bad. (Article: POPULAR POPE, BUT SAME OLD CHURCH, Nov. 8, 2013). Question: Who SAYS that what GOD wants for man is not what is BEST for him? God is the maker of man, and knows what is best for him. The makers of automobiles know what care the autos need, as put in the Operator's Manual. If car owners decide they know more than the manufacturer knows, and begin to put water in the gas tank, or in the transmission *because it is cheaper*, how long would that car be able to go down the road? Shall the car owner decide for himself what is best, or listen to the makers of the car? What many want is justification of self, to do what he WANTS to do, and avoid the consequences. It won't ever work. **If enough individuals can be changed, it would effect a change in the whole church.**

Some of these changes are (1) Continuing the efforts to justify adultery in the church, (2) Women's role in church leadership, (3) Instrumental music in worship, (4) the NAME of the church, and (5) the purpose of baptism. We have already looked at most of these matters under our second point above. Regarding the last 2, we note briefly that some congregations are dropping the words "of Christ" from their signs and advertising, because it might be "offensive" to some who DON'T claim to be churches of Christ. At this point, a good study of 1 Cor. 1:10-13 and Rom. 16:16 would be in order. Regarding baptism, who would have thought, even 20 years ago, that the time would come that some preachers among us would begin to agree with denominational preachers, that "baptism is NOT really necessary for salvation". Our arguments that baptism IS necessary to salvation, may be OLD (old as the New Testament itself), but they are not dead (Heb. 4:12). God's word STILL declares that salvation is not available until scriptural baptism is performed. The camel argues that baptism does NOT save, but the NT still says that it is "**for**" (unto) the remissions, "**saves**" (1 Pet.3:11; Mark 16:16), puts one "**into Christ**" (Rom. 6:3; Gal.3:27); makes us "**children of God**" (Gal.3:26, 27); makes us members of the body or **church** (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13, 27), brings us in contact with the **blood** of Jesus to "wash away our sins" (John 19:34; Rom.6:3; Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5), and is to last until the end of the world (Matt. 28:20).

In our story of the Arab letting the camel put his nose into the tent, we are reminded that as a RESULT, he **LOST** the dresses and jewelry that he had planned to take to the princess. What do **WE** lose today, when we let the camel stick his nose into the tent? We lose a number of things. We lose Unity in Christ, Purity of Worship, Fellowship with God and Christ, and ultimately lose our souls in hell. IS IT WORTH IT? It is time for brethren to wake up, and push the camel's nose away before he takes over the tent entirely, and then goes out and brings other camels in to take his place when he has something else to do.

Don Tarbet, 215 W. Sears, Denison, Tex. 75020, <donwtarbet@cableone.net>

