

## “You Are The Last Jackass...”

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Several decades ago Mike was asked to preach at a congregation which met in an old colonial-era meeting house. The congregation had been plagued by unrelenting **relational apprehension** that was brought on by their own pride. Pride divided the congregation into two factions — one group sat on the left side and the other sat on the right, like two opposing political parties. As Mike was finishing the message he thought they needed to hear, he glanced downward at the pulpit. There he saw a plaque engraved with the words, “**Show them Jesus.**” Instantly the Spirit of our Lord spoke to him: “*You are the last jackass the Father is going to send to these people.*”

Mike immediately recalled that God had used a donkey to stop Balaam's reckless pursuit of personal gain (Numbers 22:21-32). So when he looked out over the congregation, his words took a far more somber tone. He repeated to them what the Holy Spirit had just told him, “*You are the last jackass the Father is going to send to these people.*” After he'd spoken for a few minutes, an older man on one side of the congregation stood up. He told the gathering that he believed that Mike was presenting the last warning that our Father was going to send them. Then he got on his knees and began to repent of his own attitudes. All the people on that side of the meeting hall did likewise. Those on the other side, though, got up in a huff and walked out of the building.

Before we explain why we've shared this anecdote, we want you to know something more about us, about how we see the Holy Spirit using us together as a couple. The materials we produce emanate from our *cooperative use* of the gifts of apostleship, exhortation, prophecy, and faith. Let's define how we see these giftings of the Spirit.

- The gift of apostle is someone who is sent on assignment to embolden others who follow the Lord to fulfill a mission He's given them.
- The gift of faith emboldens followers of our Lord Jesus to resolutely trust Him as they seek to fulfill our Father's will for them.
- The prophet ensures that followers of Jesus are abiding in the will of our Father through seeking and fulfilling His *rhema*, and repenting when there's unconfessed sin in their lives.
  - The exhorter encourages those who are true to our Lord Jesus, and confronts and admonishes those who waffle through complacency.

We don't follow the path of so many in Christianity who are seeking a following, or who rely on human 👍 likes or 👎 dislikes. Our heart's desire and our resolute determination is that each of you receives a “thumbs up” from our Lord Jesus not only at the Judgment Throne but also all along your life pilgrimage to your salvation. If you're reading this, it's because the Holy Spirit has connected you to something He wants you to know *and apply to your life*.

***“They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness”*** (2Peter 2:15).

Balaam’s sin, which ultimately led to his death, was *seducing God’s people to sin*. You may have a different view of human nature, but consider this:

**Christians too have inherited from Adam a propensity to sin. They’re predisposed to be enticed and tempted by what others are getting away with, rather than being true to our Lord’s righteous commands by His grace.** (See James 1:13-16; 1:21-25.)

We know this because it’s true. When was the last time you heard another Christian speak about how their obedience to the Lordship of Jesus in their lives is demonstrated as they fulfill our heavenly Father’s purposes for them and apply His commands to their lives? Do others hear this kind of testimony *from you*? Our encounters with Christians almost always follow the same pattern: We share testimonies about Divine answers to prayer or Divine interventions we’ve experienced. They speak about the things of this world and the self-gratifying enticements they pursue. Is it any wonder that Balaam is brought up again in the final book of the Bible?

*“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality”* (Revelation 2:14).

For many years now we’ve observed that our heavenly Father is increasingly ‘pulling the carpet out’ from people and their worldly pursuits. Flagrant injustice toward minorities and aliens is being blatantly exposed, as well as a lack of regard for those who continually struggle financially and have no way out. Then, through the pandemic the carpet has been pulled out from others who are in the center of societal success. No one is being spared! But even with that, neither clergy nor pew sitters recognizes that behind all these situations is the loving hand of our Sovereign heavenly Father (see Hebrews 12:5-11).

Don’t be surprised that many clergy are bent on keeping billpayers in the pew. They have kept people from pursuing repentance as our Father intends in these difficulties. Instead, too many religious leaders have endorsed headlong pursuit of *worldly goals and values* which they say are Father’s way of showing His love for people. But this is a demonic lie!



As our Father pulls the carpet out from people who falsely believe they have control over their lives and futures, their own human nature causes them to deceive themselves that things will get better. Father may give us a reprieve in order for us to reflect on how we are sinning against Him. But regrettably, many are driven by *false expectation and presumption* — and many clergy are encouraging them to pursue these deluding inclinations which are leading them downward to self destruction.



**Please consider this:** Heartfelt repentance, not your presumption or false expectation, is what's going to bring about a change in our Father's chastisement of this nation. As Scripture bears witness, when people repent, He relents! It's grievous that the spirit of Balaam encompasses both pulpit and pew. But our Father will have you know that you can't pursue life *your way* any more! We who follow Jesus as *Lord of our lives* can encourage each other as we serve Him. But we can't help each other be happy by the world's standards. The sin of Balaam must not influence us in any way.

Mike & Sue