
Subject: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...
Posted by [james](#) on Thu, 28 Oct 2010 13:25:37 GMT
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I am studying the message to the seven churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. What I'm trying to understand is, what are the 'deeds of the Nicolaitanes'(Rev.2:6) and 'the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes'(Rev.2:15) There's some much in these seven messages written to those seven churches that can be instructional for our lives (actually, all of it) as well as the revealing of what God promises for those who will overcome. We know that the letters were for seven literal churches that were located in those seven cities in Asia during that time in history; but we also know that the warnings, instructions, and promises speak to the churches of today as well as to individuals today.

One thing that I'm not sure of and that is the doctrines and deeds of the Nicolaitanes, I do know that whatever they are, God HATES them. I did look over the outline GWB posted of the study of Revelation by Bro. Freeman and he mentioned it as being the hierarchy in the churches that sets the clergy above the laity. I spent an hour or so reading different commentaries from various web sites and I see there isn't a consensus on just what the Nicolaitanes believed and practiced.(imagine that, Christians not agreeing on scriptural interpretation) I find some believe that it was the practice of some in the church placing themselves above others as clergy/laity. Someone suggested it was the bondage of legalism. And then I found some saying that it was the false doctrine of eternal security or universal salvation(ALL men ultimately saved).Then there was the opinion that they celebrated the traditions of men with such things as Xmass, Eastar, and other pagan holy days.

Does anyone have any clearer understanding of just what were the 'deeds' and 'doctrines' of the Nicolaitanes? One thing that is clear, God hates it...so I want to be diligent to take heed to the warnings and to also hate those doctrines and deeds...

btw:the doctrine of Balaam is explained in Rev.2:14 but the false prophetess, Jezebel also teaches and seduces people to do the same thing. Rev. 2:20 I think one has to understand what a false doctrine or deed is in order to hate it.

Subject: Re: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...
Posted by [james](#) on Thu, 28 Oct 2010 16:29:03 GMT
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I found this about the Nicolaitanes written in the late second century by Irenaeus.

Irenaeus described what he knew of the Nicolaitans,"The Nicolaitans are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained diaconate by the Apostles. They lead lives of

unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

From the Ante Nicean Fathers, volume 1, page 352

In verse 15 of Rev.2 Jesus tells them that they (church of Pergamos) had in their midst some who held to these false doctrines of the Nicolaitanes. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God...what does II Tim.3:5 say? ..."from such turn away."

If this is what God said He hated...the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, and those deeds are fornication, adultery, and sexual indulgences; then all the churches today that embrace and don't preach against adultery, premarital sex, people living together unmarried, and homosexuality (and these sins are not only IN the institutional church, they're BEHIND the pulpits) are going to fit the description of those Jesus spoke of in Matt. 7:21-23 The system of man is so broken and corrupted, surely the call to come out from among them and be separate is for today like never before.

Subject: Re: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...

Posted by [GWB](#) on Mon, 01 Nov 2010 21:49:49 GMT

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I hope this is OK to share on OO according to OO rules. If not, let me know. Also, if anyone thinks it belongs someplace else, let me know that as well.

Chapter IV

The Church at Pergamos – the Church of Imperial Favor (312 A.D. – 476)

“And to the angel of the church of Pergamos write: these things saith he which hath the sharper sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and has not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou has there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of

my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.â€• (Rev. 2:12-17).

23. THE CITY OF PERGAMOS

Question: Describe the city of Pergamos as it existed in Johnâ€™s day.

Answer: Some fifty miles north and east from Ephesus was the city of Pergamos, spoken of by the Lord as the place of â€œSatanâ€™s seat.â€• One special circumstance marked it from other cities in that area. Pergamos was the capital of Asia. It could be compared in importance with such cities today as London, Paris and Berlin. When the province of Asia fell into Roman hands, Pergamos was made the capital, and that honor she retained for some three centuries. At the time John wrote, she still occupied that distinguished position. While she could not compare with either Ephesus or Smyrna as a commercial city because of her inland position, she was historically the greatest city of Asia Minor.

Pergamos possessed one of the most famous libraries in the world. It contained some two hundred thousand books, an immense number in an age when every book had to be copied by hand. Parchment (a word derived from Pergamos), a kind of writing material on which the New Testament was written, was invented in this city. Pergamos might be said to be one of the great centers of world learning.

Pergamos was also a center of heathen religious worship, which included the worship of Aesculapius, the god of healing. To the temple of Aesculapius came sufferers from all over the ancient world. There are two remarkable things about the worship of Aesculapius which we may note:

1. The characteristic title of Aesculapius was Zoter, meaning Saviour. This title belongs uniquely and exclusively to Jesus Christ. And it must have been a shock to the Christians to have it used in connection with this heathen god.
2. The emblem of Aesculapius was the serpent. Sufferers were allowed to spend the night in the temple, while tame and harmless snakes glided over the floor, which were supposed to bring the touch of the god himself. To Christians with knowledge of the Old Testament, the serpent is nothing less than an emblem of Satan, himself. Christians in that day would well regard this temple as the seat of Satan.

(Incidentally, the emblem of Aesculapius, the god of healing, has been taken by the modern United Nations, and even imprinted upon their postage stamps!)

Other heathen shrines of Pergamos included the Temples of Zeus and Athene. The altar of Zeus stood on a ledge eight hundred feet up. All day long the smoke of countless sacrifices, could be seen rising from the altar.

More than this, as the capital of Asia, Pergamos was the center of Caesar-worship. Here the emperor-worship was practiced in its most intense form. To a Christian this was nothing less than the worship of Satan. In other cities, Christians were in jeopardy mainly at that time of the year when the incense was to be burned, and usually they were left in peace the rest of the time. Here

in Pergamos their lives were in peril every day of the year. Thus was the city whose church was to symbolize in history, “The Church of Imperial Favor.”
The Church at Pergamos “the Church of Imperial Favor

24. THE CITY OF PERGAMOS TODAY

The old city of Pergamos is gone long ago. Another small city has sprung up under the name of Bergama. MacFarlane describes the city thusly.

“After crossing the Caicus, I was looking over three vast tumuli, or sepulchral barrows, the Turkish city of (Bergama) with its tall minarets, and its taller cypresses. The town consists for the most part. Of small and mean wooden houses, among which appear the remains of Early Christian churches. None of these churches have any Scriptural or apocalyptic interest connected with them, having been erected several centuries after the ministry of the apostles, and when Christianity was not a humble, despised creed, but the dapoed religion of a vast empire. The pagan temples have fared worse than the Christian churches.”

25. THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS “THE CHURCH OF IMPERIAL FAVOR (313 A.D.)

Question: What period of church history does the church at Pergamos refer to, and give reasons?

Answer: The church at Pergamos answers to the Church of Imperial Favor, which begins at the Edict of Constantine in the year 313 A.D.

1. The year 313 A.D. is a very important date, both in world, as well as in church history. For over two centuries the Church had endured the fires of pagan persecution. Satan had used the most desperate means to destroy Christianity by means of the sword, imprisonment, and death. The final persecution under Diocletian was the most severe of all. But the devil’s efforts altogether failed. Christianity could not be eradicated by the sword. Then suddenly, instead of it being a persecuted religion, Christianity becomes the state religion! Constantine, general of the Roman armies, was having some difficulties. One day, according to his account, he saw in the sky the vision of the cross, and the words, “By this conquer.” Next year when he became Emperor of Rome, he proclaimed Christianity the State religion. From then on, the church was protected by the Empire.

2. The era of pagan persecution was now past. This may be noted in the Words of Christ, when mentioning the death of one of the martyrs, He speaks of it as something of the past. (verse 13)

3. Christ declared that the church at Pergamos dwelt where Satan’s seat was. Rome, the capital of the world, the Fourth of the Beast Kingdoms of prophecy, was properly the seat of Satan. And now this wicked metropolis became the center of the Christian religion.

4. The city of Pergamos is an apt type of Rome. Pergamos, capital of the Roman province of Asia, was the center of emperor-worship. Its god of healing was Aesculapius the serpent, the very emblem of Satan himself. Its healing arts were a counterfeit of the true ministry of healing of the Early Church—a ministry that was, alas, gradually being lost.

5. The name, Pergamos, means “married.” This aptly describes the church during the

Pergamos age. Its union with the Pagan Rome was union with the world. The church was as it were, "married" to the world.

26. THE SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD

Question: Why does Christ in His salutation to the Church at Pergamos, speak of Himself as the One "which hath the sharp sword with two edges"?

Answer: The church at Pergamos which had become worldly is due a serious rebuke by the Lord. Therefore, Christ speaks of Himself as having a sharp sword with two edges.

27. THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

Question: What did Christ mean when reproving the Pergamos Church, He said, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication"? (Verse 14)

Answer: The Scriptures are quite clear on the doctrine of Balaam. Balak, king of the Moabites, apprehensive over Israel's contemplated invasion of Canaan, bargains with the Prophet Balaam to put a curse upon this people. God warned Balaam not to go with Balak, but his covetousness for the king's gold, caused him to vacillate. Balaam, being a hireling prophet, was induced by Balak to use his gift for pecuniary reward. (Read Numbers 22-25) Balaam, however, was unsuccessful in his attempt to curse Israel, for he found that the people "could not be cursed". Having failed in this, he sought to attain his ends through subtlety. As in the case of Delilah with Samson, he advised the king to tempt the children of Israel to violate their vows of separation. In complying with Balaam's suggestion, Balak apparently feigned friendship with the Israelites and encouraged his people to fraternize with them. (Nu. 25:1-3) This resulted in men of Israel marrying women of Moab, thus defiling their separation. This intermingling of the children of Israel with the Moabites resulted not only in mixed marriages, but it caused the people to "eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication". This association with Moab resulted in the children of Israel losing the pilgrim character and walk. Friendship with the world by believers is spoken of in the Scriptures as spiritual adultery or fornication.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)

Thus the church of Pergamos which entered into an alliance with pagan Rome, became worldly, lost its testimony and the glory of the Lord that had been with the church until the Fourth Century, departed from it.

28. THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES

Question: Jesus said to the Church at Pergamos, "So hast thou also them that hold the

doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. (Rev. 2:14-15) What does He mean by this?

Answer: 1. The Nicolaitane heresy had already begun to show itself in apostolic days. Jesus had commended the Ephesian church when He said, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate". (Rev. 2:6) What were deeds in that time, had now become a doctrine.

2. The word, Nicolaitane, comes from "enikao" meaning "to conquer", and "celoas", the laity. It is symbolic of the development of a priestly order that ruled over the laity. Here was fundamental deviation from Christ's command in Matt. 23:8-9:

"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

This development of a clergy that usurped rule over the people and arrogated to itself authority over members of the church to the point that the latter could not even think for themselves, became the tragic error of church history. It opened the way for all other error. Christ no longer was the mediator between God and man. Instead, the priest, or Mary, or dead saints, became the mediator. Thus was the headship of Christ set aside in favor of a substitute, or an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The unchristian system soon developed into the Roman Catholic Church with all its evil and errors.

Arthur Bloomfield in his book, "All Things New", declares: "When a church leaves its first love, it begins to turn attention to ecclesiastical power and influence. When its leaders talk about "church loyalty" they are actually demanding loyalty to themselves, while they are leading the people from the Bible. The movements of the churches to enhance their political power and social prestige by union, federation, and worldly alliances are the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. It is the effort of the church to restore by its own method what is had lost by forsaking God's method."

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is a trend that usually shows in a denomination after its pioneer days are over. The headship of Christ is ignored, and organization (some organization is necessary) is substituted for God's power.

29. SATAN'S SEAT

Question: Jesus said that the Church at Pergamos dwelt where "Satan's seat" was. What did He mean by this?

Answer: During the temptations of Christ in the wilderness, the devil mentioned that the Kingdom of this world had been delivered to him.

"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore will worship me, all shall be thine." (Luke 4:5-7)

The devil this time was telling the truth; else it would not have been a genuine temptation. Actually the Bible reveals in many places that the kingdoms of this world are under the control of Satan. Daniel 10 and other passages of Scripture show that the fallen angels of Satan have taken control of the nations, and rule over them. In the case of the Pergamos Church of the 4th and 5th Centuries, the kingdom that dominated the world was the Roman Empire, and its capital was Rome. Here was truly Satan's seat. The church entered into an alliance with Rome, and made its headquarters there. And so closely was the church and pagan Rome identified that it was not long the Pope, the earthly head of this church, assumed authority above even the emperor. Kings and emperors were crowned, and in some cases dethroned, by the man who styled himself the vicar of God who claimed supremacy over Christendom. It is obvious that the church indeed was dwelling where Satan's seat was.

30. THE PERGAMOS CHURCH—CHURCH OF IMPERIAL FAVOR

The lessons to be learned from the Pergamos Church are of a solemn nature. No doubt the church greatly rejoiced when Constantine proclaimed the Edict of Toleration, and made Christianity the state religion. But how wrong it was that the church would be benefitted by it. The fires of persecution during Smyrna days had a refining effect; insomuch that the Lord could find no fault with that church. Satan perhaps had supposed that these fierce persecutions would result in the extirpation of Christianity. If so, he was at length undeceived. When one martyr died, two rose up to take his place. Superficial Christians, who sought to enjoy the benefits of Christianity, while at the same time living careless lives, could have little taste for the severe persecution. Thus the church, during this period was kept purified.

Following the Edit of Constantine, Christianity became a popular religion. Tens of thousands were baptized in water who had no heart change. They still clung to their idols and Babylonian and Pagan practices, mingling the two together. Soon the doctrines of the Early Church became so perverted that they would have hardly have been recognizable to the apostles. The way was being paved for the development of an apostate and harlot church.

Reference: The Seven Churches of Prophecy; Revelation Series, Volume 2; Gordon Lindsay; Christ For The Nations; 1972.

I bought this series from Hank's bookstore at the Glory Barn. GWB

Subject: Re: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...

Posted by [james](#) on Mon, 01 Nov 2010 22:21:27 GMT

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Thanks, this is informative. I'm starting to lean toward the view that it's the setting up of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. I think the doctrine of Balaam is laid out so there is no misunderstanding it..."to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." And the church of Thyatira was allowing Jezebel, (that woman, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce them with the same doctrine. I think that if the deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitanes were the same as Balaam and Jezebel, then He would have said that.

The clergy set up over the laity is evident throughout all of the institutional church system, but never more apparent than in the Roman Catholic church. No wonder Jesus hates this doctrine, they're usurping the honor, praise, and glory that is His and His alone.

Again, thanks.

Subject: Re: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...
Posted by [grandom](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2011 18:38:19 GMT
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I found chapter nine in the book The harlot Church system on the nicolaitanes quite interesting in view what you all posted earlier.

Subject: Re: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...
Posted by [james](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2011 19:35:27 GMT
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I did too, it confirmed the conclusion I'd come to as it being the elevation of the so called clergy over the so called laity.

There's a platter full of meat in that book...and it's pretty much de-boned.

Subject: Re: Deeds and Doctrines of the Nicolaitanes...
Posted by [grandom](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2011 19:41:01 GMT
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james wrote on Thu, 14 July 2011 14:35 I did too, it confirmed the conclusion I'd come to as it being the elevation of the so called clergy over the so called laity.

Yep. You was spot on correct there James.
