

The Nicolaitans

Things Jesus Hates

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Revelation 2:6

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Revelation 2:15

The Nicolaitans

by Carl Graham

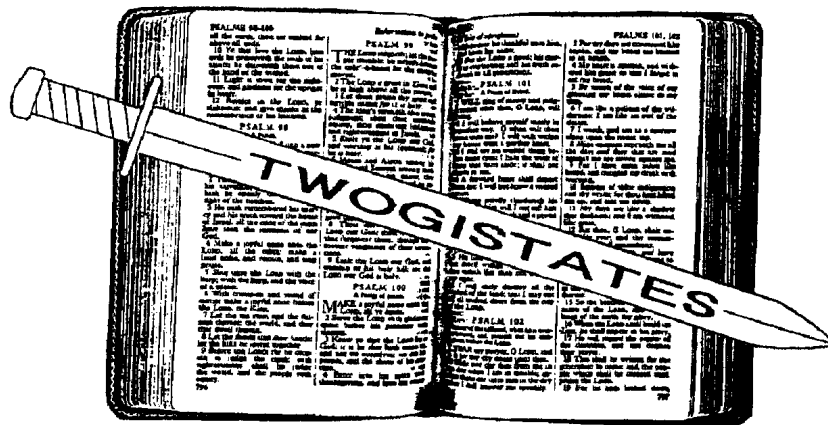
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TWOGISTATES Publishers advocate the King James Bible as the best source for God's Word in English



For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

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The Nicolaitans

It is a rarity in God's Word for Him to say He hates something. However, here it is twice in the Book of Revelation in His messages to the churches at Ephesus and Smyrna. God clearly states that He hates the deeds as well as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. If God hates it, it is well for us to understand what it is and hate it also.

To the church at Ephesus He writes, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the **deeds of the Nicolaitans**, which I also hate." Revelation 2:6

To the church at Smyrna He writes, "So hast thou also them that hold the **doctrine of the Nicolaitans**, which thing I hate." Revelation 2:15

The word "Nicolaitans" comes from two Greek words: "niko," meaning, "to conquer, or overthrow," and "laos," meaning "the people or the laity." In the early church, the followers of this doctrine tried to establish a "Holy Order of Men." This heresy is known as "Nicolaitanism." It is evident in the Christian world today as we see self-seeking men being elevated to lofty positions and given the authority to control the course of the church and direct the beliefs of the Christian people. This is also evident in the organizations of cultic leaders who have total control over their congregations.

Nicolaitanism is a not a biblical principle. It is clearly taught in the Bible that every Christian is to be totally dependent on his/her individual relationship with Jesus Christ. This was fully understood in the First Century church of Ephesus for the movement there was merely called deeds, and the members of that church actively fought it. God commended them for doing so. However, this was not the case in the church at Pergamos (300 to 600 A.D.) for here the deeds of the Nicolaitans had been escalated to a position of church doctrine. It was now a major characteristic in the polity of the church and was totally accepted by the people. God condemned them for it.

Nicolaitanism is embodied deeply in the modern day ecumenical movement whose major goal is to bring all religious beliefs together under one body. It can even be present in a small local church where the pastor assumes total control. It all has to do with how one sets about to "conquer the laity." Nicolaitanism is a concept that Jesus Christ still hates just as much as He did when He dictated the Book of Revelation to John. There is a good reason for His hatred for it takes the focus of the people away the leadership of the one who can save and redirects it to some man who can only lead them to destruction. Nicolaitanism always leaves the church in control of Satan and God gets left out.

The history of the Church of Jesus Christ is fraught with the influence of Nicolaitanism. It usually starts with a charismatic leader who assumes total control of people's lives. He/She forms organizations that are called churches. Eventually these churches come together to form some type of cooperating organization. Then the organizations become ecclesiastical hierarchies. Along the way in this cycle, the

Nicolaitans pick up orthodox churches and integrate them into the system, and it gets to where you can't tell which churches are cultic and which are not.

The insidiousness of Nicolaitanism in the orthodox church is that its Godless effects come about so gradually that the average person isn't even aware of it. Because of this, the apostasy becomes widespread throughout the church before even a few people will begin to recognize that they have deviated from the Scriptures. If anyone brings it to the attention of the leaders to try and straighten it out, the majority will cry, "Off with his head" because they like it that way. They will even quote isolated verses from the Bible to support their deviation. Some people just seem to like being deceived.

Usually, at some point, the minority believers pull out and try to reestablish the true New Testament church, but they seem to always take the seeds of Nicolaitanism with them. It doesn't take long before a new leader emerges and the people start following him/her blindly without recognizing that they are drifting right back into exactly the same pattern that they left. As new churches begin to grow from this movement, they begin to assimilate together, and from this assimilation new denominations are formed. And, as new denominations are formed, the seeds of apostasy begin to grow, and the cycle repeats itself all over again.

Today's churches are perhaps worse than those in the past when it comes to accepting the errors of Nicolaitanism as the cry for Christian unity (ecumenicalism) is heard throughout Christianity. It makes me realize that it doesn't have to necessarily be a priestly movement to aptly be called Nicolaitanism; it can be anything from a seemingly harmless change in doctrine to a leader who invades the church and controls the thoughts of the people. The churches are ripe for this, because they have been brainwashed to believe that only the highly educated can understand the Bible. Consequently, they will accept anything that calls itself Christian and embrace it as if it is a message from God.

The results of the blind acceptance of Nicolaitan influence in the churches manifests itself primarily in glorifying unsaved secular entertainers and making the tenants of salvation so worldly that the teachings of the Bible are no longer relevant. Along with this, we seem to want to embrace the practices of all denominations without even a thought as to whether their doctrines and beliefs line up with the Scriptures. The Bible clearly states that we must separate ourselves from the things that are not of God. This means that the church is to reject all forms of secular entertainment, no fault salvation, and non-biblical denominational beliefs. God even takes this a step further and says that we are not to affiliate ourselves with these unbelievers as brothers and sisters in Christ.

I know that with all the confusion on the Christian scene today that it is difficult to tell exactly what is from God and what is not. The scholars tell us that the Bible is full of errors, and that we have to ask them where the truth lies. Our leaders tell us that all religions are all right and everybody is going to heaven. The charismatics tell us that extra biblical revelation is valid for today's church and we'd better listen. But, regardless

of what anybody says, let us always keep in mind that God never changes. The things that He told us in the past still hold true today. We must get back to the Scriptures, call sin what it is, and try to live our lives to be pleasing to God.

Getting back to the Scriptures is perhaps more difficult than it sounds, for finding exactly what God's Word says is often times problematic, for every body seems to have differing opinions about what the Bible really says. This problem is made more complex as one observes the modern versions of the Bible and realizes that they never agree among themselves. To make this even more perplexing, there are always some new revised versions coming on the market that updates the old versions. The new revised versions are always different than the old ones, but they are now supposed to be God's latest revealed Word. Either the scholars can't make up their minds, or God keeps changing His. Its enough to make the average person want to throw up his hands and forget it.

However, don't be dismayed, there is a Bible out there that has stood the test of time, it has ushered in many revivals, and its words have led millions to Christ. What is this Bible? It's the old King James Version of the Bible (King James Bible), and regardless of what the modern scholars say, it has not been found to contain one error. You can trust it with you life and the life hereafter. I might add that it is the one version that doesn't mind attacking the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

I have provided a limited list of modern day movements below to help the reader get an idea of the wide variance in doctrine that orthodox churches are willing to overlook in order to achieve world church unity. These are things that clearly do not measure up to the test of Scripture, and some don't fit our original definition of Nicolaitanism, but they represent areas that affect the Nicolaitan movement.

The aim of any religious movement that operates outside the Word of God is to glorify man and to play down the necessity of accepting Jesus as Savior. This fits snugly into the plan of Satan, which is to cause so much confusion among professing Christians that we will forget our differences and begin to seek fellowship based on our commonalities. Even the most casual observer can see that this is exactly what is happening in the world today, and it stands at the heart of the ecumenical movement. If you listen carefully, you can hear the cry of "one world church" emanating loudly from each statement.

1. You can be saved and lost. This is structured to give a church board or a self-appointed apostle the right to pass judgment on the salvation of the people, and even to forgive them of their sins. It is totally contrary to the Bible and makes the sacrifice of Jesus worthless. He can't continue the sacrifice over and over. He paid the price once, and that was sufficient. The eternal life that Jesus promised us means exactly that. I think many have been fooled by the easy salvation that is being preached today. They think that they were saved once and lost again, but in reality they were never saved. It is a mystery to me why anyone would want to follow a Jesus who was so powerless that He can't protect His children.

2. You can be saved by your works. Generally, some governing body decided what is good works and rewards accordingly. This doctrine is prevalent in many churches and religious organizations, and it is a method of controlling people. Notice that this does away completely with grace and makes salvation dependent on what we do. If our works could save us, we wouldn't need a Savior. However, it is impossible to be saved and not do works. When the Holy Spirit truly abides in us, our every thought will be about Jesus, and we will naturally do as He wants us to. You see, our works must be an expression of our hearts, and our hearts must be an extension of our love for Him. Anything else is self-centered and is totally unacceptable to God..

3. All people who believe in God have a door to heaven. Not according to my Bible. Only those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior will make it. The question is often asked, "Well, what about those who have never heard the Gospel?" I don't know, but that is God's business, and He didn't tell me. However, He did write in His Word that those who have heard the Gospel would be held accountable. That should be enough for anyone who has heard it.

4. We have a prophet or leader who speaks for God. He can tell you what God wants you to do. He has the power to forgive sin. Outside our church there is no salvation. This is prime time Nicolaitanism and is apostasy at its highest level. It totally does away with individual responsibility and places it solely in the hands of the church. There is only one who can forgive sin and that is God. Anyone who buys this lie, not only is not saved, but being kept away from the only one who can save.

5. God places those within the hierarchy at a higher spiritual level than others. This is the very thing that God said that he hated, but we find it in all denominations to some degree. It may be in the order of priest, educational degrees, titles, money, or just plain arrogance. It manifests itself by some person or persons thinking that they are superior to the common people just because they have certain credentials. All denominations are plagued with this, as we seem to consign some kind of special spiritual authority to those with social standings, educational degrees, or money. This is not biblical. Titles were never used in the New Testament to separate the leaders from the people

6. Church tradition is just as important as the Bible in areas of doctrine and practice. Where this is advocated, some lofty leaders in the hierarchy will determine which traditions are important and which to reject, and they seem to always keep the ones that give them power over the people. While church tradition is important in methods of worship, it must never take the place of authority over the Bible. Sometimes we have to look to the past to know how to accomplish some tasks in the church because the Word doesn't tell us how. However, church tradition will never override or be equal to God's commands. We must be very careful that we don't violate the Word of God just because "we have always done it that way."

7. Experience is just as important as the Bible. This is the theme song of the apostate and many of them can't tell the difference between experience and

imagination. I have noticed that those who focus on this means of faith always want to come on as if they are superior Christians. Common sense will tell you that experience alone cannot be trusted, for it is purely emotional, and as such, can deceive you. Each experience must be measured by the Scripture and discounted if it doesn't measure up. Incidentally, this is one of the Satan's favorite areas of deception, for our experiences seem so real to us, and it is difficult to argue with another person's experience. It is awful easy to take the attitude of "I don't care what the Bible says, I know what I experienced!"

8. You can't sin after you are saved. This doctrine is designed to make some church board or person the experts on sin and it is a satanic lie and directly disputes the Bible. It is structured to make people feel comfortable with living in sin, or to make them doubt their salvation when they do sin. This lie often times keeps people away from God because they know that they can't live a blameless life, so they take the attitude of "why even try?" The Bible clearly tells us to confess our sins daily so that God can cleanse us daily. Without this cleansing, the Christian will surely become separated from the power of God and will look like the rest of the world. I have to confess that except for Jesus Christ I don't know of one other sinless person that ever lived.

9. God promises us worldly riches here on earth. The message of prosperity for the Christian abounds today. However, the kicker is that you always have to give to some charismatic leader before God will give to you. I've noticed that the ones who expound this message seem to be getting theirs, but the people who support them aren't. He sure didn't give the church at Smyrna prosperity when they were being persecuted, and neither did He grant prosperity to the many church martyrs. However, He did promise them rewards which He called crowns. This prosperity message doesn't hold up under any kind of scrutiny. I know plenty of Christians who are not wealthy.

10. God promised perfect health for His followers. This doctrine is designed to make people focus on some self-proclaimed charismatic healer. If you want to be healed "Worship Me" is his/her message. If this perfect health message were true, the Bible wouldn't tell us to pray for the sick, and there would be no prayer lists in the churches. Christians would be immune from diseases, and we would live forever. If this were taken to the extreme, we would deduce that a sick person could never be a practicing Christian. This is simply silly, but many believe it.

Jesus commended the church at Ephesus for withstanding the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but He condemned the church at Pergamos for accepting this apostasy as doctrine. Today, He still commends those who fight against the false doctrines and apostasy, and He still condemns those who accept all kinds of doctrines and beliefs that are contrary to the bible.

If you want to avoid the apostasy of the Nicolaitans of today, you must be versed in God's Word to such an extent that you recognize the error that is being peddled as Christian doctrine. Just because it sounds like its Christian, doesn't necessarily mean

that it is. Remember that Satan has always been a great imitator, and he just loves to imitate the ways of God, and he really delights in making his message palatable to the churches. Don't swallow his lies; always check it out, for God will never tell you or anyone else to do anything that is contrary to the Bible.

Carl Graham

**Roman Catholic Church – Nicolaitanism in action;
Papal infallibility, Vatican II, Vol. 1, p.380**

"The infallibility, however, with which the divine redeemer wished to endow his Church in defining doctrine pertaining to faith and morals, is co-extensive with the deposit of revelation, which must be religiously guarded and loyally and courageously expounded. The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful -- who confirms his brethren in the faith -- he proclaims in an absolute decision a doctrine pertaining to faith and morals"

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