

# THE SEED OF NICOLAITANISM

Revelation 2:6

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

Now there are two thoughts on what the Nicolaitanes were. It is said by some that they were a group of apostates who had as their founder, Nicholas of Antioch, a proselyte, who became one of the seven deacons at Jerusalem. They had pagan feasts and were most unchaste in their behavior. They taught that in order to master sensuality one would have to know by experience the whole range of it at first. Naturally they gave way to such abandon that their degradation was complete. Thus they had applied to them the two Old Testament names that symbolized such extravagances: Balaam and Jezebel. Since Balaam corrupted the people and thus conquered them, it was said that Nicholas did likewise. This group was supposedly forced out of Ephesus and found a place of establishment in Pergamos.

But the problem about this belief is that it is not true. There is absolutely no history for it. It is at best tradition. To adopt such a view would make the church age of Ephesus absolutely historical with no bearing upon today. This is not true, for whatever starts in the early church must continue in every age until it is finally blessed and exalted by God or destroyed as an unclean thing in the lake of fire. That this tradition is actually against Scripture, simply note that in Revelation 2:2, the Ephesian Church could NOT BEAR the evil ones. They thus had to put them out, or it would not make sense to say they could not bear them. If they did not put them out, then they were bearing them. Now in verse six, it says that they hated their deeds. So this Nicolaitane group remained a part of the first age, doing their deeds. The deeds were hated, but the people were not rendered impotent. Thus we see seeds in Ephesus that will continue and will become a doctrine that will go right up to, and into, the lake of fire.

What are these Nicolaitanes? The word comes from two Greek words. Nikao, which means to conquer, and Laos, which means the laity. In plain fact, somebody was doing something in that early church which was conquering the laity. If the laity were being conquered, then it must have been some "authority" there doing it.

What was it that God hated that was happening in that church? What was going on then, and is now going on today, is exactly what the word Nicolaitane means. The people were being subjected somehow in a way that was absolutely contrary to the Word of God.

Now to get the real meaning of what we are about to go into, I must caution you to ever keep in mind that religion (spiritual matters if you like), is composed of two parts that intertwine but are as opposite as black and white. Religion and the spiritual world are made of those two trees which had their roots in Eden. Both the Tree Of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stood in the midst of the garden and no doubt their very branches intertwined each other. Thus in the Ephesian Church is that same paradox. The church is made up of good and bad. Two vines make the church. They are like the wheat and tares, growing up side by side. But one is the TRUE. The other is the FALSE. Now God will speak TO each one and He will talk ABOUT each one. He will call

them the church. And only the elect will really know which is the true Spirit. Only the elect will not be deceived.

Matthew 24:24, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

So way back there in the early church (a very short period after Pentecost) the false vine got to intertwine itself around the True Vine and we find these deeds of the Nicolaitanes. And that spirit is going to be found fighting the True Vine until it is destroyed by God. Now have you got it?

All right. Now what was the spiritual climate of that church? It had left its first love. Leaving its first love of the Word of God was revealed to us as having fallen from its origin, which was Pentecost. In plain English, that means this church was in danger of being taken away from the leading of the Holy Spirit, the control of the Spirit. This was exactly what took place after Moses led Israel out of Egypt. The way of God was to lead them by the cloud of fire, prophetic utterance, miracles and signs, and God-given wonders. This was to be accomplished by 'God-selected', and 'God-ordained', and 'God-equipped', and 'God-sent' men, with the whole camp being dominated by a Holy Ghost move. They rebelled and wanted a set of rules and creeds to go by. Then they wanted a king. Then they wanted to be exactly like the world and went into complete apostasy and oblivion. That is exactly how the first church age started, and it will get worse and worse, until the Holy Spirit is completely rejected and God must destroy the people.

See how it started out in the early church. It was called deeds. Then it became a doctrine. It became the standard. It became the unbending way. It finally took over and God was pushed aside. Oh, it started so small, so quietly, so inoffensively. It looked so good. It seemed so sound. Then it caught a hold, and like a python, it squeezed out the very breath and killed all the spirituality there was in the church. Oh, that false vine is subtle. It is like an angel of light until it gets a hold on you. Now I want to say that I believe in leadership. But it is not the leadership of men I believe in. I believe in the leadership of the Holy Ghost coming through the Word. I believe also, that God has set men in the church, men who are gifted by the Spirit; and they will keep the church in order. I believe that. I believe also that the church is ruled over by men that God sends to take charge. But that rule is BY THE WORD, so that it is not men really ruling but the SPIRIT OF GOD, for the Word and Spirit are ONE.

Hebrews 13:7, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

But see what was happening back there. That false vine was getting a hold and it was teaching that rulership by man was right. It taught that the church had to be governed. It taught a control over the people, but instead of doing it God's way, they simply took authority and vested all the spiritual power in their own hands and came out with a holy priesthood standing between God and the people. They went right back to the old Aaronic system. They became antichrist for they disposed of His mediator-ship and imposed their own. God hated that. The Ephesians hated that and any true believer will hate it too.

We would have to be stone blind not to see that same thing at work all through the ages and right now it is the worst of all. What it was, was organization. That separated the people. God's people are supposed to be one. By ONE Spirit are they ALL baptized into one body and EVERYONE is to be moved upon by the Holy Ghost and EVERYONE is to participate in the worship of God. But men wanted the pre-eminence, so they took over control, and bishops became archbishops, and with imposing titles they by-passed the Word of God and taught their own doctrines. They got the people to obey them until the time came that their way of worship did not in any way at all resemble the early days after Pentecost. These deeds were the beginning of apostolic succession. From apostolic succession it was one easy and quick step to "church membership" as the means of saving grace. The Word was reduced to a creed. Antichrist by his spirit was predominating the church.

Look at it today. If you read Acts 2:4 the way some do, you could read it this way, "Now when the day of Pentecost was fully come, there came a priest with a wafer and said, 'Stick out your tongue,' and he laid the wafer upon it, and he himself drank some wine and said, 'You have now received the Holy Ghost.'" Incredible? That is exactly what Nicolaitanism has come to. They say, "Never mind what God's Word says. You can't understand it. We have to interpret it for you. Furthermore the Bible is not finished. It has to change with the times and we will tell you what the changes are." How contrary that is to the Word of God that emphatically states, "Let God be true, but every man a liar," whenever there is a conflict with the truth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but NOT ONE WORD of God will fail. So the people are led by people who presume to be what they are not. They say they are vicars of Christ, but what they are is antichrist.

Here is another sad story. It is the story of water baptism. In Jesus' day and after Pentecost they were immersed in water. No one can deny that. Educated men say that all they did was pour water on them because it was easy to find little holes of water in many places. And when they pour water on them, they do it in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, as if those titles were real names, and as if there were three Gods instead of just one. But stay in that organization and try and preach the truth of immersion in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be put out. You couldn't be led of God and stay in there. It is impossible.

Now Paul was a prophet, taught by the Holy Ghost. If Paul baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said anyone that did different from his preaching was accursed, then it is time to wake up and see that the church is no longer controlled by the Holy Ghost but it is controlled by the Nicolaitanes.

Acts 20:27-30, For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Paul saw it coming. But he warned them about this subtle priesthood that would come and take over with its false doctrines. He knew they would implement a way of worship that excluded the people from any part in a Holy Spirit ministry. And even right today

among those who claim to be free and full of the Spirit there is not too much freedom in the laity, and the best we can see is a few preachers with inspired preaching while the flock just sits there and tries to absorb it. This is a far cry from Paul who said that when all came together, all had the leading of the Spirit, and all participated in Spiritual worship.

And the church corporate has never learned this lesson from the Scripture nor from history. Every time God gives a visitation of the Holy Spirit and people get free, after awhile they bind themselves right back to the very thing they came out of. When Luther came out of Catholicism, the people stayed free for awhile. But when he died, the people simply organized what they thought he believed and set up their own creeds and ideas and repudiated anyone who said opposite to what they said. They went right back to Catholicism with a little different form. And right today many Lutherans are ready to go all the way back.

Oh, yes! In Revelation 12, that old whore had many daughters. These daughters are just like mother. They set the Word aside, deny the work of the Spirit of God, subjugate the laity, and make it impossible for the laity to worship God unless they come through them or through their pattern, which is nothing but a blueprint of unbelief from Satan himself.

Where, oh where, are we spiritually? We are in a wilderness of darkness. How far we have wandered from the first church. Pentecost is nowhere in view and the Word cannot be found. Apostolic succession, which today abounds, is not found in the Word. It is a man-made device. It supersedes illegally the truth that GOD, NOT MAN, has set His leaders in the church. Peter was not even in Rome. Yet they lie and say he was. History proves he was not. There are people who read history, but shrug their shoulders and go back to believing a lie.

Where can you find the 'vicar of Christ' in the Word? No one takes His place, yet it has been done and people accept it. Where can you find that 'added revelation' is accepted by God, especially revelation contrary to one already given? Yet they accept it and rest on it. Where do you find a 'purgatory'? Where do you find a 'mass'? Where do you find 'paying money to get out of hell'?

It is not in the Word, but men put it in their own book and by it took over the people, ruling them by fear. Where do you find that 'man has the power to forgive us as though he were God'? "Grievous wolves," is hardly strong enough to describe them.

Nicolaitanism. Organization. Man over man.

Get back to God. Repent before it is too late. See the handwriting on the wall. It is writing judgment. As the sacred vessels were desecrated and thus brought the wrath of God, now the sacred Word has been desecrated and the Spirit grieved, and judgment is here, even at the door. Repent! Repent! Go back to Pentecost. Back to the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Back to the Word of God, for why will ye die?