

**Solid Rock Christian Church**

**Manassas, Virginia**

**Bible Study**

**March 17, 2019**

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**Topic: "TWO-STEPPING SAINTS"**

**[Indicators of Nicolaitanism in the Church Today]**

**Refs:** Revelation 2:6, 15

**I. Introduction**

A. We are living in a day and age where there is a "truth decay" as it relates to the bible. Even so, for those who take the time to study and meditate on the Word of God, must stand firm on the absolute truths contained in the Scriptures.

B. Through this study, we will discover together how ancient Nicolaitanism has infiltrated many of the churches today and as a result, many of the people of God are holding a weak and distorted view of the sacred Scriptures.

**II. Background and Historical Context [Part I]**

A. It is significant that the "deeds" and "doctrines" of

the Nicolaitans are only mentioned in connection with the churches in Ephesus and Pergamon. Both of these cities were known for occultic and pagan activities.

B. It appears that the "doctrine" of the Nicolaitans taught that it was all right to have one foot in the church and the other in the world, Not only that, but you didn't need to be so strict about separation from the world in order to be a Christian.

**Comment:** Let's look at what the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians concerning separation from unbelievers, idols, and wickedness (Cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

C. As a result, for the purpose of this study, we shall examine the character and behavior of "Two-Stepping Saints."

### **III. Background and Historical Context [Part II] -**

Question: Who were the Nicolaitans and what was their Doctrines and Deeds?

A. The name "Nicolaitans" is derived from the Greek word *Nikolaos*, which is a compound word consisting of *Nikos* and *laos*.

B. *Nikos* is the Greek word that means "to conquer" or "to subdue." The word *laos* is the Greek word for "the people." It is also where we get the word laity. When these two words (i.e., Nikos and laos) are compounded into

one word, they form the name Nicolas, which literally means "one who conquers and subdues the people."

**C. Historical Background** - Irenaeus and Hippolytus, two leaders in the Early Church who recorded many of the events that occurred in the earliest recorded days of church history, said that the Nicolaitans were the spiritual descendants of Nicolas of Antioch, who was ordained as a deacon in Acts 6:5. ((Let's turn there in our bibles and read what it says.))

**Note:** A word of caution: Even as we look at Nicolas of Antioch and glean information from two of the early church fathers, I want to be careful with charging this Nicolas with what follows. It may be that there was another Nicolas and Nicolas of Antioch may be guilty only of having a similar name. With that being said, let's examine what the early church father said about the origin of the Nicolaitans.

D. We know quite a lot of information about some of the other men who were chosen to be the first deacons. On the other hand, little is known about the others.

E. Acts 6:5 tells us that Nicolas was "a proselyte of Antioch." The fact that he was a proselyte tells us that he was not born a Jew but converted from paganism to Judaism. He then experienced a second conversion, from

Judaism to Christianity. From this information, we know the following facts about Nicolas of Antioch:

1. He came from paganism.
2. He was not afraid of taking an opposing position as evidenced by his ability to change religions twice.
3. He was a free thinker and open to embracing new ideas and concepts.

**Consider this:** Judaism was very different from the pagan and occult world in which he had been raised.

4. When he converted to Christ, it was at least the second time he had converted from one religion to another.

F. According to the writings of the Early Church leaders, Nicolas taught a doctrine of compromise, implying that total separation between Christianity and the practice of occult paganism was not essential.

G. From Early Church recordings, it seems apparent that this Nicolas of Antioch was so immersed in occultism, Judaism, and Christianity that he had a mind set to tolerate all of it.

H. As we examine the target Scriptures for this study

(i.e., Rev. 2:6, 15) we will first look at the City of Ephesus. The primary pagan religion in this city was the worship of Diana (Acts 19:24-28).

I. There were many other forms of idolatry in Ephesus, but the worship of Diana was the primary object of occult worship in that city.

J. In the City of Pergamos, there were numerous dark and sinister forms of occultism, causing Pergamos to be one of the most wicked cities in the history of the ancient world.

#### **IV. Indicators of Nicolaitanism in the Church Today**

A. First, Jesus did not hate these individuals whom He called Nicolaitans, but He hated what they were teaching - which was a doctrine of inclusiveness and compromise in the church. Unfortunately, this doctrine has reemerged into many churches today.

B. As the problem of worldly compromise continues to spread in the church and be promoted by some of today's most visible church leaders, it is vital for believers to be able to recognize the modern signs that point to a rise of Nicolaitanism in the church today. Here are the signs:

- No emphasis on living holy and separate from the world.

**Fact:** Modern Nicolaitanism dresses itself in the guise of inclusivity. Here is a statement that you may hear:

"Since everyone is right and no one is wrong both spiritually and morally, why should there be a need for separation?"

- There is no emphasis on the doctrinal teachings in the Bible.

**Fact:** Modern Nicolaitanism dresses itself in the guise of progressiveness, dismissing much of the Bible as being too restrictive or exclusive of other people's beliefs.

\*\* Instead of being The Guide for absolute truth, the bible is used generally as a reference for illustrations, motivational messages, inspirational ideas, principles to build a business, etc...

\*\* Basic Bible doctrines such as the Virgin Birth, the sinlessness of Christ, Salvation by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone, holiness, eternal judgment, etc... are not taught. The point is, Biblical Doctrine is often unknown, inadequately taught, or it is considered optional.

**Comment:** In my early years of Pastoral Ministry, one parishioner asked during a Bible Study Session: "Why do you always talk about Bible Doctrine?"

My response: "Right doctrine will lead to right living when believed and embraced."

C. Where modern Nicolaitanism prevails, sound doctrine is replaced with social justice, and an appeal to mass audiences by making people feel better about themselves.

D. Never-the-less, the Apostle Paul warned his spiritual son Timothy that these days would come. Let's read together Paul's warning and charge to young Timothy (Cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-5)

\*\* Vs 3 - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

E. A third sign of Nicolaitanism in the church is:

- No emphasis on absolute truth or absolute biblical morality.

**Fact:** Modern Nicolaitanism dresses itself in the guise of being open-minded. This thought process will cry out that it is

“unfair and unjust to assert that the bible is absolutely correct and is the absolute truth for living a godly, moral life.”

F. A fourth sign of Nicolaitanism in the church is:

- No exclusionary belief that Christ alone is The Way to Heaven.

**Fact:** Modern Nicolaitanism dresses itself in the guise of tolerance. According to this mind set, to categorically declare that Jesus Christ alone is the way to Heaven makes no sense and is intolerant of the views of others.

## V. Summary

A. The Bible instructs us to love others and in doing so, we must think like Jesus thinks when it comes to any teachings that result in a diluted, powerless, compromised version of Christianity.

B. If we are to be like Jesus, we must think like Him and what He hates, we must also hate.

Think on these things!!