

Beware the Doctrine of the Modern-Day Nicolaitan Apostles

Nicolaitan apostles are rising. It's a new breed, but then again, it's not a new breed at all. Jesus warned us about Nicolaitan leaders in his letter to the church in Pergamum.

“So you also have those who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will war against them with the sword of My mouth” (Rev. 2:15-16).

Noteworthy is the fact that Jesus applauded the church at Ephesus in an earlier letter and noted how he “hated” this Nicolaitan doctrine. So, what, exactly, was the teaching of the Nicolaitans?

A Domineering, Dominating Doctrine

Rick Renner, author and pastor of Good News Moscow Church, explains the spirit behind this doctrine succinctly:

The name “Nicolaitans” is derived from the Greek word nikolaos, a compound of the words nikos and laos. The word 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 are compounded into one, they form the name Nicolas, which literally means one who conquers and subdues the people. It seems to suggest that the Nicolaitans were somehow conquering and subduing the people.

Nicolaitan apostles are domineering and dominating. They operate in control and spiritual abuse. Their churches and networks are cultish and step dangerously close, if they don't

cross over, into divination through Jezebelic prophetic utterances motivated by the need to conquer and subdue people.

The Apostle John Warned Us of These Types

Diotrephes seemed to be cut from the Nicolaitan cloth. John the apostle warned his followers about this man, who theologians conclude was likely a bishop in the congregation. It seems Diotrophenes thought more highly of himself than he ought, a stance the Bible warns against (see Rom. 12:3) and was blocking John's true apostolic ministry.

The Bible also warns us to mark those who cause division among us (see Rom. 16:17) and this is what John did in his third epistle. In doing so, he has effectively warned our generation about these types of domineering leaders:

I have written briefly to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to take the lead among them and put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority and refuses to accept my suggestions or to listen to me.

So when I arrive, I will call attention to what he is doing, his boiling over and casting malicious reflections upon us with insinuating language. And not satisfied with that, he refuses to receive and welcome the [missionary] brethren himself, and also interferes with and forbids those who would welcome them, and tries to expel (excommunicate) them from the church (3 John 9-10, AMPC).

Can you imagine any other leader in the early church refusing to listen to John's suggestions?

Nicolaitan Leaven Rising in the 21st Century

Throughout history, the church has seen Nicolaitan leaders, and many have sounded the trumpet. *Pulpit Commentary* shares:

This ecclesiastical Cleon is the type of all vain, noisy,

self-asserting teachers, whose main object is to get their own way—an object which they effect by browbeating all who differ from them. No authority is respected and no character spared which seems to oppose their policy. Even an apostle is denounced if he ventures to maintain that the truth may be larger than their view of it. Christian ministers now must not be surprised if they sometimes meet with no better treatment.

Finally, concerning the attitude of Diotrephenes, Matthew Henry admonishes in his commentary:

Both the heart and mouth must be watched. The temper and spirit of Diotrephes was full of pride and ambition. It is bad not to do good ourselves; but it is worse to hinder those who would do good. Those cautions and counsels are most likely to be accepted, which are seasoned with love. Follow that which is good, for he that doeth good, as delighting therein, is born of God. Evil-workers vainly pretend or boast acquaintance with God. Let us not follow that which is proud, selfish and of bad design, though the example may be given by persons of rank and power; but let us be followers of God, and walk in love, after the example of our Lord.

If you are a Nicolaitan leader, consider your ways (see Hag. 1:7). God hates what you're doing. If you are serving a Nicolaitan leader, cut ties so the blood he is shedding is not on your hands. If you are a social media fan, stop sharing Nicolaitan leaders' posts to curry their favor, or you'll end up in bondage like the rest of their followers.