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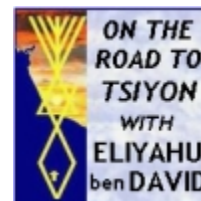
Tsiyon News

Tsiyon Messianic Radio Newsletter Vol 4.25 - 03/16/6009 TAM - 06/19-20/2009



An overview of our entire
Revelation Series -

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Latest News At Tsiyon

Note from Dawn: Have you read Eliyahu's newest book, The [Messianic Revelation Series \(Volume 1\)](#)? If so, please consider joining Ester, Susan, SueJean, and Vince in writing a review of the book at [Amazon.com](#) and/or at other book review services including: [goodreads.com](#), [shelfari.com](#), [barnesandnoble.com](#), [RevelationSeries.com](#). Do you have a favorite talk radio, local, XM, Sirius, Christian, or online radio program you like to listen to? If so, pass along the station information to us and we will contact them to see if they would like to host an interview with Eliyahu on their program. Want to know updates about the Tsiyon Bound tour? Follow Danny and SueJean.

Listener Feedback - Priestcraft?

Listener Comment: *As a fan & regular listener of Tsiyon.org I am also on the 6th chapter right now in your latest book called [Messianic Revelation Series Vol 1 Announcing Judgment Day](#). I am really impressed with it. So many other teachers & commentators have seemed to miss the mark when it comes to the Book of Revelation. Your book has given me a fresh new look at the Book of Revelation with Hebraic eyes, which is needed in order to really understand it. After all, it was a Messianic Jew who wrote the book of Revelation. I am looking forward to reading the rest of this book. I had a question from chapter 2. I didn't understand what priestcraft (Nicolaitans) is/was. It is found here in Revelation 2:6(NASB): "Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" [and in] Revelation 2:15(NASB) "So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans." But I don't have a grip on what that really means, or why it is considered sin. I was trying to explain this to some of my friends who also don't seem to understand what priestcraft /Nicolaitans is. Also, if you look up Nicolaitans in the Catholic encyclopedia, it seems to give a poor explanation of what it really is [see <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11067a.htm>]. In your book, you mentioned that priestcraft/Nicolaitans, is one of the sins that believers will be judged for. I was wondering if you could explain what priestcraft/Nicolaitans is in more detail. And this isn't the same thing as witchcraft, right? Thank you for your time.*

Tsiyon Answer: Thank you for your support of Tsiyon Radio and your kind comments regarding my new book on Revelation. Now, let's get to your question about why I say *Nicolaitans* of Revelation is synonymous with *priestcraft*, and why that's a sin that Messiah hates. In your question you quote the only two verses in Scripture that include the word *Nicolaitans*. In the first instance overcomers from the assembly in Ephesus are commended because they "hate the works of the Nicolaitans" which Messiah says "I also hate." By contrast, in Pergamos some were transgressing on that same point, and Messiah corrects them in these words:

"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the teachings of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. 15 So you also have those who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." Rev 2:14-15 MKJV

The English noun *Nicolaitans* derives from a compound of three Greek words. By examining these three words we can decipher its meaning.

Nikos means a conquest; victory; triumph; rulership of the conquered.

Laos means people - laymen, laity.

Ton in this case is roughly equivalent to the definite article "the."

This breaks down something like this:

Nicolaitans = The conquerors/rulers of the people (i.e. laity).

The sense of the term "teaching of the Nicolaitans", then, is: *the doctrine in support of a clergy/priesthood class ruling over the laity*. This is the ancient doctrine of the pagan mystery religions which is well-defined as *priestcraft*. More about priestcraft in a moment.

Notice that the "teaching of the *Nicolaitans*" equates to "the teachings of *Balaam*" mentioned in the preceding verse. *Nicolaitans* and *Balaam* mean very close to the same thing in their respective languages. *Balaam* derives from two Hebrew words, *bāla* (he swallows) and *ām* (people). Thus we have "conquerors of the people" and "swallowers of the people" - two ways of saying exactly the same thing. Therefore, identifying the "teachings of Balaam" will add further definition to the meaning of Nicolaitans. Notice these facts about Balaam.

Balaam was a *soothsayer*, a practitioner of divination for personal gain (Joshua 13:22). To secure customers Balaam was a "swallower of the people" - i.e. a religious con artist. He made people believe that he was closer to the "gods" (including YHWH) than they were. That way, they would hire him to mediate the favor of the gods and would secure his services by payment of money and/or favors. Such soothsayers claimed knowledge of what I like to call *religious mumbo-jumbo* i.e. rites and rituals that only they are supposedly authorized to perform to secure the favor of the "gods." The occupation I have just described to you has been known from ancient times as a "priest." See these definitions:

A priest or priestess is a person having the authority or power to administer religious rites; in particular, rites of sacrifice to, and propitiation of, a deity or deities. [Wikipedia]

Ritual, Noun 1. a religious or other ceremony involving a series of fixed actions performed in a certain order. [TheFreeDictionary.com]

Now, consider the definition of *priestcraft*:

Priestcraft n. 1. Priestly policy; the policy of a priesthood; esp., in an ill sense, fraud or imposition in religious concerns; management by priests to gain wealth and power by working upon the religious motives or credulity of others. [TheFreeDictionary.com]

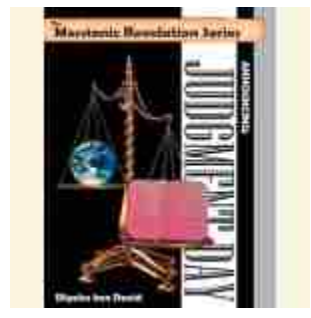
Now, consider the definition of *witchcraft*:

witchcraft - The use of magic, esp. for evil purposes.

- [Out of Babylon #157](#)
- [White Horse Rider 1 #156](#)
- [4 Horsemen Released #155](#)
- [He is Worthy! #154](#)
- [Judgment From Heaven #153](#)

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mag·ic (mjk) n. 1. The art that purports to control or forecast natural events, effects, or forces by invoking the supernatural.

Thus, Balaam behaved in the manner of the pagan priests, fraudulently mediating between men and the "gods" by means of rites and rituals of divination (magic) to extract personal gain from others. This is the very essence of *priestcraft*.

When priests today perform their rituals and claim to turn wafers and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ (i.e. magic) for their paying audience they are practicing exactly the same thing, and many more examples could be cited through the length and breadth of world religion ..but I digress.

Balaam was hired by King Balak of Moab to curse Israel. Balaam attempted to apply the same mumbo-jumbo he used with all the false "gods" to YHWH and found that YHWH could not be controlled, but that YHWH was able, instead, to control him, to cause him to bless Israel instead! Finally, Balaam resorted to enticing Israel into idolatrous practices to get them to bring a curse upon themselves. By this manipulation Balaam earned his pay.

Let it not be lost upon us that Balaam's prmission was to curse Israel , and that he used manipulations of priestcraft to draw Israel into practices of idolatry through which they brought curses upon themselves. (See Numbers 22-24)

Now, back to Revelation. At the time Revelation was written there were already many Gentile "Christians" that had grown up in the pagan mystery religions and who were well versed in the machinations of priestcraft. Many of these people distained Israel as Balaam did and sought to overturn the remnant of Israel from their place of leadership among the believers. These were the *Nicolaitans* Messiah was addressing in Revelation. Through the ungodly manipulations of priestcraft after the likeness of Balaam the Nicolaitans eventually succeeded in overturning the Biblical order of believing Israel in their midst, installing in its place a counterfeit priestcraft system by which they could be "the conquerors/rulers of the people (i.e. laity)." History shows us that these Balaamites were wildly successful in establishing the religious system Revelation describes as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." Even now she is moving ever closer to her day of judgment for her many and monumental sins against YHWH and His people. The warning goes out to her many captives! "Come out of her, My people, that you may not be partakers of her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues." [Given these facts, I don't think I need to explain why Messiah "hates" the deeds of the *Nicolaitans*, nor why the *Catholic Encyclopedia* leaves out all I have explained here.] Rev 17:5, 18:4

Thoughts from Eliyahu ben David:

This weeks program will give you an overview of our entire Revelation Series. It's one you won't want to miss!

Blessings and shalom in the name of Y'shua Messiah,

Eliyahu ben David

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